BING

WINTER
2001

No. 129

THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE

THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE

Founded in 1950.

Web sites: Club: www.crosby.circle.btinternet.co.uk
BING magazine: http.//members.aol.com/macwilmslo/BING_magazine.html

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UK	£10 per annum
Mainland Europe, including Eire	£11 per annum
USA and Canada	US $20 per annum
Australia and New Zealand	A$30 per annum
South America	£15 per annum
Japan	£15 per annum

All remittances should be sent in **£ sterling** payable to 'Michael Crampton - ICC' with the exception of (a) US and Canadian members who should send their remittances in US dollars to F. B. Wiggins (b) Australian and New Zealand members who should pay David Currington in Australian dollars (c) Mainland European members (not Eire) who should pay Etty Gits in £ sterling. For addresses see inside front cover.

Articles for inclusion in the magazine should be sent to the Magazine Editor.
Other Correspondence concerning membership, non-arrival of the magazine or other aspects of the club's affairs should be sent to the Secretary/Treasurer.

BING is the official journal of the International Crosby Circle and is published in the Spring, Summer and Winter of each year. Opinions expressed in articles are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the ICC. All original material © Copyright ICC 2001.

EDITORIAL

It is rare for world events to find their way into BING magazine but inevitably this edition is overshadowed by the tragic and unprecedented disasters of September 11 in New York and Washington. These terrorist acts will have touched many of our members lives and we send our deepest sympathies to any of you who have suffered loss. Those of us in the UK have almost been desensitised by thirty years of IRA terrorist acts such as the destruction of the centre of Manchester in 1996, the numerous bombings in London and the ongoing problems in Northern Ireland but nevertheless we were all shocked and repulsed by the events in the USA. We extend our sympathies and support to all of our American friends.

Harry Crosby, who works for Merrill Lynch in a building adjacent to the World Trade Center, was in a car five or six blocks away from the disaster and was interviewed on the Today Show on NBC giving his eye witness impressions. By chance, he had telephoned Alan Fisher at around 8:30 a.m. that morning saying that he had told his driver to pick him up thirty minutes later than usual as he was going to have breakfast at a nearby cafe. This delay may have saved his life.

Gary Giddins lives close to the disaster site and we exchanged e-mails soon after the tragedy. In passing Gary was very complimentary about Harry Crosby's TV appearance saying that he emerged as a particularly articulate witness and Bing "would have been immensely proud."

There have been no firm developments regarding the possible merger with Club Crosby. A handful of members raised queries but it would appear that any merger is not going to be a huge issue to the majority of ICC members. As Michael Crampton will report, there was unanimous support for the merger (if it should proceed) at our annual meeting in Leeds in October. The Club Crosby team are continuing their deliberations and further news is awaited.

Our last issue of BING magazine was well received and I was intrigued to see quite a lot of chat on the discussion board of the Bing Crosby Internet Museum about the car advert we used for our back cover. The consensus seems to be that Bing's image was superimposed and this could be right. I am afraid we don't know the answer. The front cover this time shows Bing rehearsing for his BBC-TV appearance on "Top of the Pops" in 1975 and the eye-catching back cover has kindly been supplied by

Jon Oye.

This edition has news of another successful annual meeting at Leeds, when we were honoured by the presence of Mozelle Seger. Mozelle's talk is reproduced and gives a fascinating insight into life behind the scenes at the Crosby office. Also, it seems that Gary Giddins book is to be released in a paperback form in the UK and there are further details in the article about Gary. New member Richard Zimmerman has a most interesting article about working with Bing on the Hollywood Palace show and as you will read, Lionel's holiday this year took him to Hollywood. Keep an eye out for that man, Ben Weaver, in this issue as he pops up all over the place.

It seems to us that there is now more awareness of Bing in the USA than has been the case for many years and we have Gary Giddins to thank for this. We must build on his efforts as we approach the centenary of Bing's birth and a separate article about possible actions to publicise Bing appears later in the magazine.

There are a number of potential Christmas presents available in this magazine. Gord Atkinson's excellent new two-CD set, Wig's eagerly awaited discography and finally my book, *Bing Crosby - Day by Day*, will hopefully prove tempting. This is Bing's time of year when his voice is heard everywhere and as we enter the festivities season, may I wish you all a very happy Christmas and a fruitful New Year.

Malcolm Macfarlane

SECRETARY / TREASURER'S REPORT

As I begin my last report for 2001 it is just six weeks since the terrible events of September 11th and given the tight security measures necessary to secure public safety, the ICC was very proud of the bravery shown by Mozelle Seger and her friend Joanne Reeves who flew to Britain from California to be with us at our annual meeting/dinner on Sunday October 7th.

Mozelle's speech and a report of her attendance at Leeds will be reported elsewhere in the magazine but here I would like to extend a personal thank you to both ladies for their courage and fortitude in being with us on our special day. Our thoughts go out to all who were affected directly by this unbelievable act of war.

NEW MEMBERS

USA and CANADA

It is a privilege once again to commend Wig and Laura Wiggins for their untiring efforts to promote membership of the ICC in North America and they proudly introduce 36 new members for 2001. A warm hand of friendship is extended to all.

Harry Crosby (New York, New York) HONORARY, Nathaniel Crosby (Scottsboro, Arizona) HONORARY, Rich Little (Las Vegas, Nevada) HONORARY, Joanne Reeves (Montrose, California), Jon Dubbs (Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts), Traci Costarella (Auropa, Colorado), Hugo del Bove (Wyckoff, New York) Richard Zimmerman (Burbank, California), Robert Lydon (Lansdale, Pennsylvania), William Loux (Edison, New Jersey), Paul Mangiamele (Farmington, New York), Netta Lafleur (Pointe Claire, Quebec, Canada), William Thomas (Ocala, Florida), Lee Ford (Kirkland, Washington), Lee Rotter (Germantown, Maryland), Jennifer Samek (Princeton, Minnesota), Jack Wittenborn (Lake Placid, Florida), Alexander Ghosh (Honolulu, Hawaii), Robert Handy (Waverly, Ohio), Samuel Clerk (Fayetteville, North Carolina), Kevin Connelly (Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey), William Chrzan (Utica, New York), Dennis Connelly (Sayreville, New Jersey), Stanley Rosenthal (Briarcliffe Manor, New York), Dennis Van Deventer (Liburn, Georgia), Charles Frankboner (La Meser, California), Ron Middlebrooke (Mesa, Arizona), Joseph McManus (Lake Hopatcong, New Jersey), Richard Watts (Pacific Grove, California), Brian Meek (Arlington, Tennessee), Martin Green (Trumbull, Connecticut), Martin McQuade (Brooklyn, New York), Steven Crosby (Hermosa Beach, California), Marc MacGinnis (Hollywood, California), Roy Ezell (Harrison, Arkansas), Andrew Picaman (Downey, California).

ENGLAND

Joe Ready (Old Swan, Liverpool), Les Waters (Cramlington, Northumberland), Mr J. P. Doyle (Upvevston, Cumbria), Margaret Scott (Leeds, West Yorkshire).

SCOTLAND

James Sprott (Coatbridge, Lanarkshire).

DONATIONS

Members continue to give generously either directly or via the purchase of back issues of the magazine and we thank the following for their support.

James Sprott, Raymond O'Toole, Yvonne Bowles, Ian Arnott and a member from Leeds who does not wish to be identified.

If we have missed any names from this important list please let me know so you may be included in the next issue of BING. We are grateful for your support.

DEATHS

Sadly I must draw members' attention to the loss of the following valued members. All enjoyed their association with the ICC and their relatives have written to say how much each person prized their membership of the club.

Les Brice of Romford, Essex was a long time member and friend of the ICC and we were informed of his death by his son Gary who told us that Les died after a short fight for life, following heart surgery. Les was a very keen Bing fan and he was singing to the nurses to the end. Les leaves a widow, Gwen, a son and two doting grand children in their twenties. Members who are interested to learn the details of Les's vast Bing collection can contact Gary via his e-mail address - gary@garybrice.co.uk

Irwin Ridout of Ramsgate, Kent died on August 18, aged 77 years.

Raymond Minns' death was reported to us by his son Phillip and he informed us that Raymond had been keen on Bing's work since he was a schoolboy. Raymond lived in Hull, East Yorkshire.

We extend our sincere condolences to family and friends.

LEEDS 2001

Another joyous and successful day at the Mansion Hotel, Leeds is behind us and members who attended will not forget the brave contribution made by Mozelle Seger. Mozelle gave us a rare insight into Bing's business life and she shared with us her obvious delight in being associated with Bing, his friends and family throughout her 27 years employment with the Crosbys. We thank Mozelle and her friend Joanne for their thoughtfulness in being with us.

It was strange not having Jim Reilly at our side for the first time since 1978 but we did have his wonderful tapes and members were generous with their applause for Jim at the end of the meeting. We do hope that his health will permit a visit next year. Arnold Pope teased us once again with his quiz and no one managed to correctly answer all ten questions. Well done Arnold and we look forward to your 37th attendance at Leeds next year.

Amongst the issues debated at Leeds was the possible merger of the ICC and Club Crosby. Members gave unanimous support to the discussions currently taking place on this issue and they fully endorsed the following suggestions, if indeed the Club Crosby membership wishes to proceed with the merger: -

- That Club Crosby should remain and become the International Club Crosby thus retaining the world's oldest fan club and the initials ICC.
- The International Crosby Circle should merge with Club Crosby and its name would cease to be used
- The Club's magazine title should be BING with a truly international flavour and within the pages of the new magazine a balance of the best of BINGANG and BING would be sought.
- That a team of officers should be appointed to reflect a balance of membership and new titles should be considered.

Your opinions are sought on this very important issue and no changes will take place without the support of the majority of members in both clubs. WE SEEK YOUR VIEWS NOW.

US member **Greg Van Beek** of West Bend, Wisconsin made available copies of the rare LP - *Bing & Kathy's African Safari* and this raised £60 for club funds. We thank Greg for his generosity.

SUBSCRIPTIONS 2001

Members will be pleased to learn that the fees for this year remain the same as last. Each year, the club has to expend time and money in chasing members who have forgotten to pay their sub so please help us by RENEWING PROMPTLY and if you are able to send a small donation for club funds then this gesture will be warmly appreciated. Please include a SAE if an acknowledgement is required.

CALENDAR 2002

There are plenty of copies left of this attractive issue and I urge members to support the ICC by buying as many copies as they can afford. Thanks to Jim, Ron Bosley and Derek Perkins for the superb pictures and clear layout.

Finally, may I thank all who have striven throughout the year to make the ICC a very successful club, your support and enthusiasm are appreciated. May I wish all members a joyous and peaceful Christmas season.

Until spring, Aloha.

Michael Crampton

Bing Crosby's family sues Universal for $16M

Remember this news item last year? A magazine called Jam! carried an update in October.

Bing Crosby's family is crooning the blues, claiming Universal Music has cheated the estate out of $16 million in royalties. *Variety* said the family launched the lawsuit last year but has a hearing scheduled for next month seeking access to documents and e-mail messages they say will support their breach of contract claims.

Universal assumed control of Crosby's recordings through a series of takeovers and mergers. In his lifetime, the singer signed two contracts with Decca Records, which was in turn bought by MCA Records. The latter company was eventually folded into the Universal corporation, which has interests in music, film, television, and amusement parks.

Variety said Crosby's contract called for a royalty of 15% of the wholesale price on songs recorded before 1949 and 7% of the retail price. An audit left the Crosby clan to the conclusion that they were being paid 7% on all songs, instead of the 1949 differential. The family has requested access to a series of e-mail messages relating to the earlier contract, although Universal is claiming revealing the contents would violate lawyer-client privilege, *Variety* said.

Aside from the Crosby claim, singer Peggy Lee is suing on behalf of all Decca artists and Hole's Courtney Love is suing Universal on behalf of herself

and her late husband Kurt Cobain.

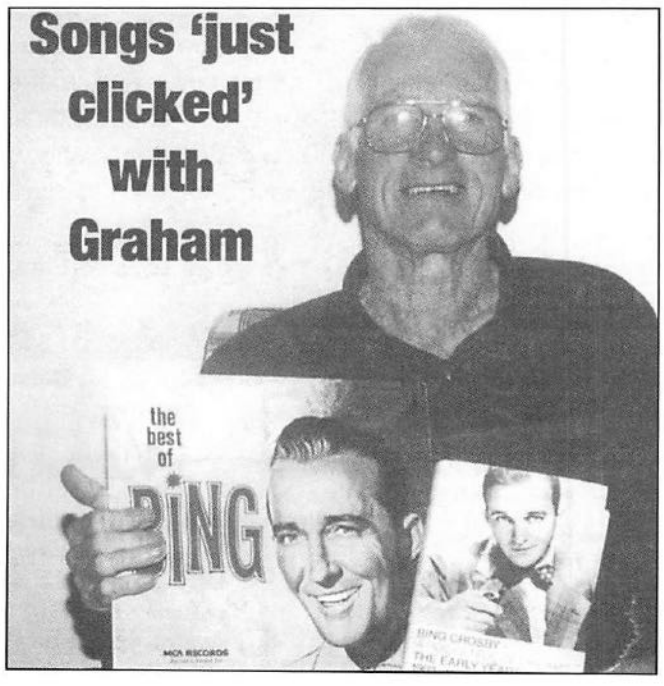
Guinness World Records 2002

Trevor Wagstaff was the first to advise me that Bing was back in his rightful place in this year's edition of the long running Guinness book. Page 145 of the UK edition carries the information that "White Christmas" as recorded by Bing on May 29, 1942 is the best selling single of all time with an estimated 50 million sales, although the exact figure is unknown. "Candle in the Wind" is described as the best selling UK single since charts began in 1952. The book estimates that when Bing's versions of "White Christmas" on 78s and LPs are added in, sales exceed 100 million. These words are remarkably similar to those supplied by Trevor to the publishers back in 1998. Well done, Trevor and others such as Pete Cakanic who have bombarded the compilers with facts and figures about Bing.

Bing's biggest Aussie fan

Both Ron Field and Charles Chapman from Australia sent me a cutting from *The Australian Senior* newspaper of September containing this headline. The accompanying article by Lindsay Ballard begins as follows:

Almost half a century has passed since Graham Pascoe, first became a fan of the late, great crooner, Bing Crosby. Now, as a 67-year-old retired teacher and lecturer living in Bathurst, NSW, his love of Bing's music has not waned. Far from it! Graham is busy researching the legendary singer's impact on the world of entertainment in Australia and is looking for help with his project.



The article goes on to describe how Graham first became a fan and also gives details of his trips to Gonzaga and Tacoma in 1983. Graham is a member of the Victorian Bing Crosby Society in Melbourne and he has joined the ICC as well. He intends to present the results of his research into Bing's impact in Australia at the Hofstra conference next year. Anybody who can help Graham can contact him at 211 William Street, Bathurst, NSW 2795 or call him at (02) 6331-6535. He would particularly like to hear from anyone in Australia who has "The Road to Bing Crosby" and "The Bing Crosby LP-ography" publications.

Nat, Ella and Bing - Legends of Swing

Peter Monaghan alerted me to this show which has been touring the UK for the last two months. Peter saw it in Paisley and it is advertised as "a nostalgic night of music, song and anecdote featuring Johnny Wiltshire and the Jazz All-Stars." The show recreates the greatest hits of Nat King Cole, Ella Fitzgerald and Bing with a singer called Jez Unwin taking the Crosby songs.

The Making of "The Crosby Years" and "A Crosby Christmas"

Gord Atkinson gives us some of the background to his excellent new CD issue.

It was a beautiful California day in July 1974 when I visited the Crosby estate in Hillsborough for the first time. Bing had agreed to meet with me for an in depth interview about his life and times.

I was warmly welcomed by Bing and his son, Harry, who were standing at the front door as I arrived. As we entered their beautiful home we were joined by Kathryn and Alan Fisher. It was a most congenial atmosphere. Since I was embarking on the making of my radio series, "The Crosby Years", I requested a photo as a memento of the occasion. Harry kindly consented to take the picture of me with his parents. As he crouched to focus on us, Bing said, with a twinkle in his eye, "No, no, Harry. Don't take it shooting up, that's a nostril shot. Stand up and get us at eye level." We all laughed as Harry took a treasured photo to add to my Crosby collection.

Harry Crosby's photo

My series of taped radio interviews with Bing began several years earlier. By 1973 it was my intention to produce, with his permission, an authorized radio anthology for his upcoming 50th anniversary in show business. He agreed to meet with me for two lengthy sessions. However, before our dates were confirmed he became seriously ill and underwent successful lung surgery. While he was convalescing a few months later, he called me and re-scheduled a date for our first meeting. He was truly a most thoughtful, kind and considerate friend. I was greatly privileged to know him for over thirty-two years.

We met for our second session October 31, 1974 and taped another lengthy interview at his home. These interviews and taped conversations with over fifty of his relatives, friends and co-stars, combined with his incomparable recordings, broadcasts and film soundtracks were compiled for our 14 hour radio series, "Gord Atkinson's The Crosby Years".

In 1975, accompanied by my wife, I returned to Hillsborough to present him with the first set of tapes. In 1981 I was greatly honoured to be the emcee at the unveiling of his bronze statue at his alma mater, Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington.

Winner of three major international radio awards, "The Crosby Years" has been broadcast around the world and recently has been updated and made available on the Internet and on a limited number of CDs.

The first release from the series is a two part "Crosby Christmas" which has been re-mastered and digitally enhanced. Both CDs are over 65 minutes long. Special guests among others, include: Bob Hope, Dinah Shore, Fred Astaire, Peggy Lee, Perry Como, Mel Torme, Ella Fitzgerald, John Scott Trotter, Ken Carpenter and Kathryn, Larry, Bob and Gary Crosby.

For a preview of "A Crosby Christmas" log on to the Internet at www.whenfm.com which is the site of my nostalgia radio programs. Another series of special interest to Crosby fans is a four part salute to Bob Hope, "Thanks for the Memories", which is also available on CDs.

To quote Bing at the end of my last interview with him: "Merry Christmas! I hope it's a pleasant and happy one and finds everyone in good spirits. Merry Christmas."

Gord Atkinson

(Editor: "A Crosby Christmas" is being released exclusively to members of the I.C.C. at a very special introductory price of $20.00 U.S. for both CDs (including postage). This really is a very special issue and members should not confuse it with other programmes called "The Crosby Years" put out by John Salisbury in Portland, Oregon in the 1970s. US and Canadian members can obtain it from:
Greg Mausz, Anderson Publishing,
102 Boyce Avenue
Ottawa, Ontario K2B 6J2, Canada
Phone: (613) 721-0811, Email:
gmausz@home.com
UK members see the separate flyer for details.)

George Stoll estate sale

The estate of the late George Stoll and his wife was auctioned by Butterfields in September and fetched $802,000 before including the sale of a 30-carat emerald-cut diamond which was expected to bring in $250,000. The Oscar which Stoll won for the 1945 score to *Anchors Aweigh* sold for $156,875 which was seven times more than anticipated.

Before going on to fame in Hollywood, Georgie Stoll worked with Bing on many occasions in the 1930s and a lot of twenty pen-and-pencil original musical arrangements for Bing's Woodbury shows brought in $2,643. It would have been nice to have known what songs were featured as we still have many gaps in our knowledge of the Woodbury shows.

I was recently informed about a web site dedicated to the Boswell Sisters (http://www.boswellmuseum.org/) and I supplied details about Bing and the Boswell Sisters on the Woodbury Show to Vet Boswell Minnerly (the daughter of Vet Boswell) who runs the site. Vet is sending me the information she has about the shows.

BING IN THE USA

IT'S CHRISTMASTIME AGAIN!

Though I am writing this article for the Winter issue of BING on a warm, Indian Summer's day in mid-October, the Christmas gift catalogs have already begun arriving in the daily mail, and on my latest visit to local music stores I found that the bins filled with holiday CDs are starting to appear as well. Several of Bing's most popular albums are available again this year, including my earlier compilations for Universal Music such as "The Voice of Christmas" (MCAD2-11840), "The Very Best of Bing Crosby Christmas" (MCAD-12019) and "A Merry Christmas From Bing Crosby & The Andrews Sisters" (MCAD-12377). Bing's perennial favorite "White Christmas" (previously known as "Merry Christmas", (MCAD-31143) also is on prominent display as well.

By the way, Bing's world famous "White Christmas" album, with its familiar cover photo of a smiling Santa Bing, is listed in this year's Universal Special Products Christmas catalog as the "Top Seller" of all its CDs, a position Bing's album has often held since its original introduction by Decca Records way back in the 78rpm days of 1945.

For this season, Capitol Records also has repackaged its previous "Bing Crosby Christmas Classics" CD album and released it with a new cover under the title of "I Wish You a Merry Christmas" (CAP 33600). This was the original title used by Warner Brothers Records when it was first issued on LP in 1962. However, the new Capitol version is missing one of the Warner Brothers tracks, "Pat-A-Pan"/"While Shepherds Watched Their Sheep", as well as Bing's television duet with David Bowie on "Peace On Earth"/"The Little Drummer Boy". The deleted tracks had been included on the previous Capitol CD release.

MAIL ORDER ADDRESSES

For ICC members without a convenient music store in their neighborhood, it is becoming ever more desirable, if not more convenient, to order Bing CDs, video tapes and DVDs by mail. In response to several requests, here are the best known mail order companies in the United States. They accept orders by mail, by telephone and via the Internet, and they also accept domestic and overseas credit card charges. I have traded with each of them and consequently can recommend them to ICC members. The most recent catalog from one of these companies, featuring Bing prominently on the cover, is shown here.

(1) Collectors' Choice Music
P.O. Box 838
Itasca, Illinois 60143
Telephone: 1-800-923-1122
www.collectorschoicemusic.com

(2) Critics' Choice Video & DVD
P.O. Box 749
Itasca, Illinois 60143
Telephone: 1-800-367-7765
www.criticschoicevideo.com

(3) Collectables Records
P.O. Box 77
Narberth, Pennsylvania 19072
Telephone: 1-800-336-4627
www.oldies.com

(4) Worlds Records
P.O. Box 1922
Novato California 94948
Telephone: 1-800-742-6663
www.info@worldsrecords.com

And for the best personal service of all, Crosby collectors should remember that Select Circles, P.O. Box 302, Riverside, Connecticut 06878 can provide you with Bing's latest CDs from all over the world. The owner of Select Circles, fellow ICC member Chick Wilson, would welcome hearing from you about your requests. Just telephone Chick at (203) 661-8421 for up-to-date information.
And my very best wishes for HAPPY HOLIDAY SHOPPING to you all!

BEN WEAVER, BING'S MAN IN VANCOUVER

Among many active ICC members across Canada, my friend Ben Weaver of Nanaimo (on Vancouver Island) in British Columbia, is one of the most enthusiastic Crosby collectors around. During last year's holiday season, Ben was honored with a full page tribute in his local newspaper, the Daily News, complete with color photos, a listing of Bing's Top 40 song hits, and a review of the history of Bing's immortal recording of "White Christmas". Here is the text of the main story about Ben Weaver and his great Crosby collection.

City Man Has Thing For Bing
White Christmas: Ben Weaver Says There's More To Renowned Crooner Than Holiday Favourite

By Walter Cordery, Daily News

In a quiet unassuming bungalow on a quiet unassuming street in central Nanaimo, Ben Weaver has compiled the finest collection of Harry Lillis memorabilia on Vancouver Island. Weaver has been a fan of Lillis's since his family first got electricity on their Langley dairy farm in 1947.

"Back then it was all radio, and we were really close to the U.S. border, so we heard American radio," Weaver said. It was radio that got Weaver hooked on Lillis. And Lillis, better known to millions around the world as Bing Crosby, has been his lifelong hobby - though Weaver admits it could be considered an obsession. When the former banker heard Crosby sing his old radio theme song called "The Blue of the Night", "I thought he was the best singer in the world."

Now, almost 50 years later. Weaver still considers the world's most renowned crooner as the greatest popular singer he's ever heard. A room in his home is a shrine to Crosby. Weaver has dozens of books, scores of records, boxes of old 78s, CDs, movies, posters, pictures, golf paraphernalia and other assorted knick knacks all of which revolve around Crosby. Part of his prized collection is the complete set of Jim Beam bourbon decanters, specially made for Crosby's golf tournament.

Weaver's passion for the crooner started at an early age and he's been feeding his passion ever since.

"I started collecting his albums in 1952 with the money I earned on my paper route," Weaver said. "It was always Bing. Oh, I heard the others, but I thought there was Bing and then all the rest." Crosby was lucky in a way. Weaver said, because he came along just as the microphone was being invented. "His timing was perfect with the advent of the microphone. Prior to the microphone, singers had to blare out their songs like Al Jolson did, but Bing could phrase a song musically and not have to blare it out like the others, thanks to the microphone."

"I wouldn't say he was the best singer in the world but he was the best singer of popular songs," Weaver said. He thinks perhaps an opera singer by the name of Mario Lanza may have been the best singer the world has ever known. Lanza is Weaver's wife Sue's favourite singer. "But when it comes to popular music, Bing was untouchable really," said Weaver. What astonishes Weaver even more about Crosby's vocal ability is the fact that the crooner had no real formal music training.

"His mother made him take voice lessons for about three weeks, but he just couldn't stand it, so he quit."

Not that it matters to Weaver.
"He could record with others and sing duets. You don't think of Sinatra or Dean Martin as singing duets," Weaver said. And he was certainly overlooked as an actor, according to Weaver. During his movie career, Crosby was nominated for the Best Actor Oscar three times, and he won the prized statuette in 1944 for his role in "Going My Way".

One of Weaver's prized Crosby collectibles is a recording of Crosby reading Mark Twain's "Tom Sawyer". "He had a great speaking voice as well as a great singing voice."

It has taken Weaver nearly half a century to compile his collection and he's had plenty of help. People know what to buy for him. "There's not a Christmas or birthday that goes by that I'm not getting some Bing stuff," he said.

And when he's not receiving "Bing stuff" for

presents, he's scouring the antique shops all over North America, corresponding with other people around the world to trade collectibles with, or searching the Internet for that rare Crosby piece he doesn't already have. He admits to being a tad obsessed: "I can remember one day we were on a trip in our motor home and we were traveling along checking out all the antique shops for Bing stuff. By the end of the day, we realized we had only traveled 12 miles!"

But as Weaver said: "You just don't know where you are going to find something, so you've got to go looking."

Comment: This was a delightful, and well-deserved article about fellow Crosby collector, Ben Weaver, which I thought other ICC members would enjoy reading as much as I did. And I hope that Ben has received some additional "Bing stuff" as a result. Also, it's interesting to note that Sue Weaver, like other long-suffering ICC wives, prefers another singer to Ol' Bing. For instance, one of my wife Laura's favorites was the most popular male vocalist in Italy during the 1930s and early 1940s whose name was Carlo Buti. He had an excellent light baritone voice with an easy reach up into the tenor range, and he sang many songs about his favorite city, Florence. Interestingly, Carlo Buti was known as "the Italian Bing Crosby" during those days, even though his voice was not at all like Bing's. Are there any other ICC members who remember Carlo Buti? You can find him on a few imported Italian CDs, even today, if you are interested.

FURTHER PRAISE FOR ED MELLO & "CROSBY ON RECORD"

In response to David Dore's tribute to fellow ICC member Ed Mello, and his pioneering discography "CROSBY ON RECORD", in the Summer issue of BING, I received a very nice letter from Helen Tolton of Lakeport, California, which I would like to share with everyone. Helen and her late husband were longtime fans of Bing and she continues her strong interest in Bing to this day.

"Dear Wig,
As to the last issue of BING, you asked for feedback.

Well, I enjoyed it immensely. One of the articles touched me very closely, and brought back a flood of memories, memories bright, sharp and wonderful. Under 'Bing In The USA', the wonderful article about 'Bing's Original Discographer' by David Dore' was the one.

I was there, then, and know all about it. What happy and exciting times they were! I still have my copy of 'CROSBY ON RECORD' as pictured. It was the miracle of the day, and we were ecstatic when it was produced. I knew Ed Mello and am happy to hear he is still alive and well in San Francisco. He certainly was one of the early moving forces of the day. The article states that Ed has been a collector since 1941. I started in 1929!

And, now to the best part: those super "Music For Old Timers" radio programs that were broadcast in those days on station KYA in San Francisco. At that time, KYA was in the Fairmont Hotel, on top of Nob Hill. We - my husband and I - were permanent fixtures at those broadcasts. They were always on Sunday nights. A gentleman named Monty Bancroft was their sound engineer, and we got to know him very well. A great person.

All of what is known about Bing's recordings, today, began with all of us pioneers. I am 87 years old, and don't do much writing anymore (I have written myself out), but this article made me just have to write something.

Thank you, BING magazine, for stirring me up and reviving those wonderful memories of yesteryear.
Sincerely,
Helen Tolton"

And my sincerest thanks to Helen for sharing her warm thoughts about Ed Mello and the early years of Crosby collecting with all of us. Just think, Helen began collecting Bing's records back in 1929, even before the Rhythm Boys left Paul Whiteman to appear at the Cocoanut Grove with Gus Arnheim. Now that's really something to be remembered in this day and age;

AT LAST! THE NEW BING CROSBY DISCOGRAPHY

I am pleased to report that the new discography of Bing's commercial recordings, which I have compiled with the very much appreciated collaboration of fellow ICC member Jim Reilly, has been published at last. Entitled "BING CROSBY'S COMMERCIAL RECORDINGS FROM 78s TO CDs", it is a fully illustrated book of 145 pages which includes 50 photographs of Bing and some of his fellow artists, rare record labels and selected album covers.

Bing Crosby's Commercial Recordings

From 78s to CDs

The discography is 8 1/4 x 11 3/4 inches in size, and it also features written summaries of highlights from Bing's recording career and lists of the titles of some of Bing's most important single records and albums, such as his "40 Top Hits", his Gold Records, his "Musical Autobiography" box set and the "Bing's Hollywood" LP album series.

The tabular listing for each of Bing's commercial recordings includes the studio date, names of the songwriters, Bing's musical accompanists and fellow vocalists, the master and take numbers, the original commercial record number (a first!) and an appropriate compact disc number, if it has been reissued on CD (another first!). Also included are record label identification tables and indexes' of the relevant compact discs and the recording titles listed in the discography.

An interesting result of my research work for this discography has confirmed that of the approximately 2,100 titles recorded by Bing (including known alternate takes and unissued test pressings), all but some 400 recordings have already been converted to compact disc somewhere in the world. And additional titles continue to appear regularly on CD. Extra pages have been included in the discography to accommodate recordings that, inevitably, will be reissued on future CDs.

I sincerely hope that this new publication will prove to be an easy-to-use guide to Bing's commercial recordings for Crosby collectors everywhere. American and Canadian ICC members can now order copies directly from me, and those in the United Kingdom and Europe can obtain them from Jim Reilly. I also have asked David Currington to co-ordinate requests for copies from members in Australia and New Zealand.

Please see the enclosed flyer for ordering details.

BING IN CHINA

My son, Frontis Wiggins, III, and his wife June recently arrived in China where he is assigned as the chief Information Management Officer at the American Embassy in Beijing. During a recent telephone call, Frontis provided me with the interesting information that Bing means "ice" in Chinese. For instance, "bing cha" is translated as "iced tea", which I guess is only appropriate for the cool character that Bing always affected during his career.

While they are in Beijing, I have asked Frontis and June to be on the lookout for a copy of the long-rumored recording by Bing of the Chinese national anthem, which Bing supposedly made back during World War II. It would be surprising if a copy exists after all these years, but you never know what might turn up at a flea market if you look hard enough!

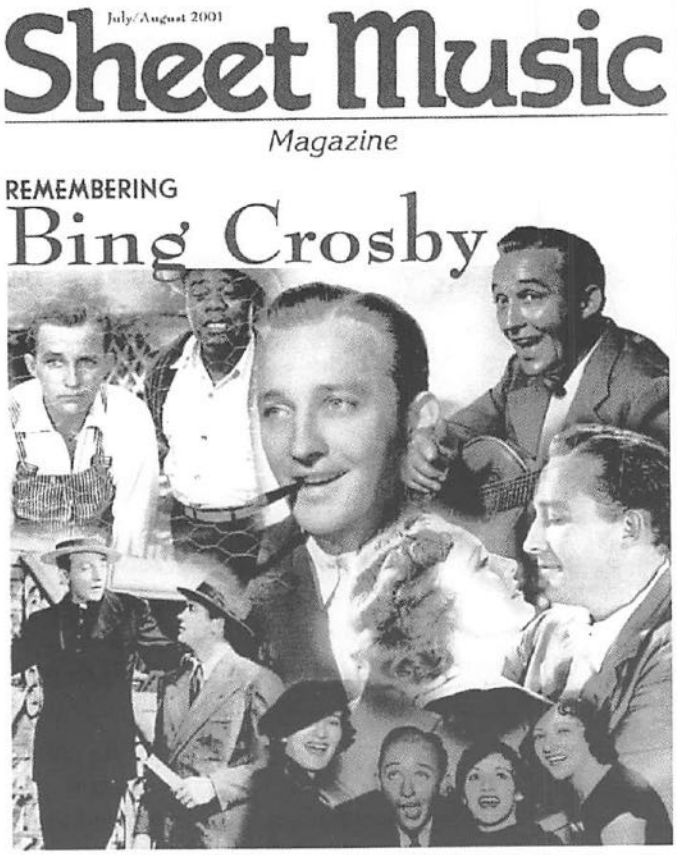
And for anyone who might be wondering, yes, my real name is "Frontis" as well. To be precise, I actually am Frontis Burbank Wiggins, Jr., but "Wig" has long seemed much easier for everyone to use. In conclusion, Laura joins me as usual in wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, and we hope all of you have a most enjoyable holiday season.

F. B. (Wig) Wiggins
October 20, 2001

Sheet Music Magazine

Charlie Baillie sent us a copy of the July/August edition of this magazine which was more or less completely dedicated to Bing. The magazine runs to 66 pages and is published bimonthly by Shacor Inc., 333 Adams St., Bedford Hills, NY 10507. As the title suggests, the magazine is all about sheet music and this issue contains eleven pieces of music for songs made famous by Bing, namely: Gone Fishin', Sioux City Sue, Now is the Hour, The Moon Got in my Eyes, Sam's Song, Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate the Positive, Where the Blue of the Night, The Bells of St. Mary's, Sweet Leilani, Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral

and Row, Row, Row. There are articles by Bugs Bower about making the *Thoroughly Modern Bing album* in 1968 and by Gary Stevens who reminisces about his various dealings with Bing from 1931 onwards.


July/August 2001
Sheet Music
Magazine
REMEMBERING
Bing Crosby
WITH: Where The Blue Of The Night (Meets The Gold Of The Day) ✧ Sioux City Sue ✧ Gone Fishin' ✧ Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral ✧ Sweet Leilani...and more!

I was particularly interested in the Bugs Bower piece which reads as follows:

> Working with Bing Crosby was wonderful! He was the consummate pro - cheerful, prepared, knowledgeable, funny and very creative. . . . We rehearsed over the telephone - with Bing in Beverly Hills and me in New York City. It took a matter of minutes to set the vocal keys and musical routines. Everything was so easy. The following month, I met him in the lobby of a recording studio in New York City and he said, "Hi, I'm Bing." And I said, "Hi, I'm Bugs." With that, he said "Let's go!" and we were off.
>
> Bing requested that only an engineer and I be present - even though all the singers in the vocal group and the musicians desperately wanted to attend this session. He knew all the words to all the songs. (A music copyist had made printed lyrics for him to sing from, but he only occasionally glanced at them.) On the first song, "My Friend, the Doctor" (the longest song on the album) we spent about 25 minutes with vocal retakes. To my chagrin, when the engineer, Warren Slatten, tried to play Bing's track, nothing was there! The vocal track was silent. No Bing, no sound, nothing! I was really upset because I had no idea what was wrong with the recording. What could have happened? Well, we were lucky. Warren discovered a tiny piece of recording tape had somehow become trapped behind the recording head, canceling Bing's vocal track. Bing could not have been more understanding. He just shrugged his shoulders and said, "Let's do it again."
>
> Bing loved to sing and record - it was obvious when working with him that this was his life. He asked about the musicians, especially the ones who played the ad-lib jazz choruses. He complimented me on the arrangements and, overall, thought we had put together a very happy, professional-sounding album.
>
> . . . It was raining quite heavily and when he offered me a ride to my car, I told him that would be terrific. While driving on 42nd Street, he told the driver to pull over to the curb. He opened his door and called out to two nuns who were walking in the rain. "Sisters, Sisters, can I give you a lift?" It only took a moment for them to recognize who he was, and you could see how flustered they became. They were on their way to St. Patrick's Cathedral, about a dozen blocks away. They gladly accepted his invitation. Can you imagine the conversation that took place after the nuns arrived at St. Patrick's: "Who do you think just stopped and picked us up in a big black chauffeured Cadillac??!!" I'll never forget this incident.

The magazine is well worth having and contact Sheet Music Magazine, Subscription Dept., PO Box 58629, Boulder CO 80323 for details. The subscription is $18.97 for six issues but it may be possible to buy this one back issue. See also the magazine's web site at

www.sheetmusicmagazine.com/

Bing and Kathryn's home open again

The Coyote Point Museum Auxiliary held a tour of Bing and Kathryn's estate in Hillsborough, California, called "A Crosby Christmas." The tour was held on the first two weekends in October: Friday, Saturday, Sunday 5,6,7, and 12,13,14. The estate was decorated by prestigious designers,

florists and artists for Christmas. There was a boutique with numerous vendors as well as a silent auction and an area to purchase light refreshments. Auxiliary members were available in each room to provide information about the Crosbys and their lovely home.

During the second weekend, a group from BING'S FRIENDS & COLLECTORS SOCIETY visited the mansion and met our President Kathryn Crosby as part of the celebrations for the club's twentieth anniversary. Cathie Wilson sent the following report to the Bing Crosby Internet Museum;

> Twelve of Bing's Friends & Collectors members attended the Crosby Mansion house tour on October 14. We were shuttled from a designated location up to the mansion and were met by a friendly docent who obliging took pictures of the group in front of the Christmas decorated front door. The group was then escorted inside the house where a small history was offered regarding the house, previous owners and the reconstruction the Crosby's did after they obtained ownership. Various rooms that were decorated for the Christmas season were several guest bedrooms, Bing's library (Oscar appropriately displayed), loggia, butterfly and rose garden and the formal living room. The upper floor consisted of bedrooms and play area for the Crosby children plus Kathryn's bedroom. The various rooms had on display pictures of Bing and other celebrated folks, collected antiques that Kathryn and with the help of Bing's orchestra leader John Scott Trotter had gathered from the warehouses of William Randolph Hearst. The formal living room had on display the actual piano from Bing's film HIGH SOCIETY and was being played competently by a member of a chamber music group.
>
> Mrs. Crosby was on site that afternoon and spent time with the group. She was gracious, unrushed in her speaking with the folks in the group, spent time in having pictures taken with members. Congratulated Hobie (who she remembered as working on her Butterfield Auction soon after Bing's death) on twenty years of continuous work for Bing's Friends & Collectors Society. Kathryn was dressed appropriately for the season in a bright red Christmas color pant suit accented with a spectacular gold cross necklace. (I didn't get a chance to ask the origin of the neck piece).
>
> Despite the press of other onlookers the tour was essentially unrushed and folks could take their time in looking at the various display rooms. The tour ended up at the public tent where refreshments could be purchased and where some memorabilia could be bought. Also a silent auction was being conducted and included some of Bing's CD's as well as some articles from the house. Before I forget, Kathryn also took the time to sign autographs for members of the group, business being conducted in the kitchen of the house. I did have this sense that Bing was watching from the kitchen table sipping some Minute Maid orange juice at all the goings on. Our little group departed back to our original departing place per shuttle and after were not hesitant about stating how enjoyable the afternoon went.
>
> **Cathie Wilson**

Ben Weaver was another who shared his impressions on the net:

> . . .We were introduced to Kathryn, who was there for most of the day. We had photos taken with her, as a group and individually. Kathryn was very friendly and warm. She signed autographs for anyone who asked. The tour took about two hours. A lunch was served on an outside patio following the tour. Kathryn was also there signing books ["My Life With Bing" and Gary's book "A Pocketful Of Dreams" were available for sale].
>
> We were not allowed to take photographs inside the house, apparently because that activity disrupts the flow of the tour and upsets some people. I did manage to take lots of photos outside. The grounds are very well kept. The rose garden was very nice with plenty of "The Bing Crosby Rose" growing.

Ben (right) with Kathryn Crosby and Sam Fleshman at the rear exit.

We were each given a booklet/magazine which contains a detailed description of the mansion and some history of it. The following is from the booklet. "In December 1965, Bing and Kathryn Crosby, their two sons, Harry Lillis Jr. and Nathaniel, and daughter Mary Frances, moved into the Hillsborough home. Bing's good friend was William Randolph Hearst. On long walks at San Simeon they would talk about the antiques Hearst had collected, many of which were stored in a huge warehouse in New York City. Kathryn and John Scott Trotter, Bing's musical director whose avocation was interior design, went to New York to find items in the warehouse for the new Crosby home. The house remains full of mementoes from Bing's and Kathryn's careers, including the Academy Award Bing won as Best Actor in 1944 for *Going My Way*. The children are grown and the third floor playroom now has toys and games for grandchildren. In 1998, the Crosby Estate was the site of the Coyote Point Museum thirty-fourth Annual Decorator's ShowHouse."

Ben Weaver

Bing Crosby: A Pocketful of Dreams, The Early Years 1903-1940

We were delighted to read that Gary Giddins's book on Bing was awarded first place at the 12th annual Ralph J. Gleason Music Book Awards, sponsored by Rolling Stone, BMI and New York University. The awards were presented on Friday, September 21 during an invitation-only cocktail reception at New York's Sony Club. Founded in 1989 to honour the best books about contemporary music and musicians, the awards are named for San Francisco music critic and Rolling Stone co-founder Ralph J. Gleason. Our congratulations and thanks go to Gary for his major achievement in bringing Bing back to public notice.

Gary has also been in demand as a speaker on Bing and on October 4 he gave the Parker Lecture at the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts. The advertising material for this included the following:

> Bing Crosby made an indelible mark on American culture-perhaps more so than any other modern performer. Author and columnist for the Village Voice since 1973, Gary Giddins maintains in his new book, Bing Crosby: A Pocketful of Dreams: The Early Years, 1903-1940, that Crosby virtually invented the modern vernacular style of pop singing. He pioneered microphone technique and initiated the use of tape in radio and recording. Why is it, then, that today he is nearly forgotten? Join Gary Giddins for a discussion of Crosby's art, his influence, and his intriguing absence from our musical dialogue. The George S. Parker Lecture Fund makes this program possible. A book-signing reception follows the lecture.

The following day, the Museum staged live entertainment by Lynne Jackson and Mike Palter titled "An Evening with Bing Crosby and his Contemporaries." Gary also presented the Hibernian Lecture in Irish-American history on October 12 in the Cushwa Center at the University of Notre Dame and later in October he was interviewed on WBUR radio in Boston in when he took listeners' questions about Bing over the phone in a most impressive and fluent manner.

Reviews of Gary's book continue to surface and we thank Pat Shields for sending us the following review by Tony Gleake in the *Hollywood Reporter* of July 16.

> We learn right off the bat that Bing Crosby's great-great-grand-father was known as Organ O'Brian, and he lived, according to legend, in County Cork, Ireland, during the 18th century. That is a long way from Toluca Lake, Calif., where the great-great-grandson made his home after he began to make it big in the movies a couple of centuries later.
>
> Gary Giddins, the jazz critic and biographer of Louis Armstrong and Charlie Parker, not to mention the savant we met on Ken Burns' "Jazz," is nothing if not thorough. For "Bing Crosby: A Pocketful of Dreams - The Early Years, 1903-1940" is only the first of his three-volume biography of the singer whom all too few remember these days. It covers the period in which Crosby left his high school theatricals and became a major stage, radio and movie star.
>
> Giddins quickly sets us straight on the Groaner's formerly immense rep. He was bigger than the Beatles, bigger than Sinatra, bigger than Elvis. Crosby scored 38 No. 1 hits, more than any other artist, including the Beatles, who only had 24, and Elvis Presley, who only scored 18. Between 1927 and 1962, he charted 368 records under his own name and 28 more as a vocalist with various band leaders, for a total of 396 - more than Sinatra (209), Elvis (149), Nat King Cole (118) or the Beatles (68). By 1980, he had sold more than 400 million discs. His "White Christmas" was the most popular record in history, charting 20 times between 1942 and 1962.
>
> From 1915-80, he was the only movie star to rank as the No. 1 box-office attraction five times (1944-48), and his "Going My Way" was the highest-grossing film in the history of Paramount until 1947. And of course, with his "Kraft Music Hall" on Thursdays, he was one of the radio stars that TV killed.
>
> Giddins covers Crosby through the years when he first made it with the Paul Whiteman band, inventing the art of crooning later taken up by Sinatra, Perry Como and Dean Martin. He takes us through the moviemaking years, including the night Crosby got drunk and smashed up his car in front of the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel, resulting in a few days of jail time.
>
> We learn that Paramount decided to team Crosby with Bob Hope in the decidedly unforgotten "Road" pictures franchise after executives caught their comedy act - which the two had honed live on the stage of New York's Paramount Theater - in an impromptu set at Del Mar Race Track, of which Crosby was one of the founders.
>
> We are given quickie profiles of the writers who provided the ad-libs the stars used during shooting these

legendary films, and Giddins has found the old scripts with the original lines and the handwritten improvs on the page beside them.

Abundant material is introduced concerning Bing's relationship with Jack Kapp, the man who started Decca Records, including a verbatim transcript of a recording Kapp made of a long argument he had with the singer over how many choruses to perform for a recording of "I Wished on the Moon." It was Kapp, Giddins argues, who made Crosby the recording star that he became, pressing him to include light classics in his repertoire and widening his ethnic reach with Irish and Hawaiian material.

Artie Shaw calls Crosby the first hip white man in America, and Giddins stresses Bing's friendship with Bix Beiderbecke and his close relationship with Louis Armstrong, whose path into the movies he eased. Crosby's recordings with both these jazzmen are still classics.

No singer should be without this book. It's the story, among other things, of the man who invented American pop singing.

Tony Gleake

I was startled to read that three volumes are now contemplated but in fact I understand from Gary that this is incorrect. Reading these types of review, I am struck by the impact the book has on the younger reviewers, such as Tony Gleake, who clearly have little idea of Bing's impact during his peak years. I applaud the final paragraph of the review. Marvellous!

The theme of Bing being "the forgotten man" as Frank Sinatra once sang, was repeated in two other reviews of Gary's book and we are grateful to Gord Atkinson for sending us a review by Bert Archer in a July edition of the *National Post* (Canada's national newspaper). The review is headed *The greatest celebrity of them all is neglected* and here is an extract:

Gary Giddins, a ridiculously painstaking biographer, thinks - and with this first volume of his Life of Bing he's got me agreeing with him - that Crosby has been forgotten because he is too fundamental: He's the forest we can't see for the trees. Which is not as odd as it sounds. Bing is the stuff of which contemporary culture as we know it was made. He had his predecessors - Caruso, John McCormack, Mary Pickford, Rudy Vallee - but Bing was the very first to exist in the world of mass cultural creation and celebrity as those things are currently defined. He created many of the templates for them. And he has, since his peak between 1934 and 1954, been dissolved into everything that has followed, from Frank to The Backstreet Boys, Brando to J.Lo, *Leave it to Beaver* to Drew Carey.

Giddins's book is not, unfortunately, going to make a very big difference in the way people see Der Bingle. It's safe to say they will continue not to see him, except, perhaps, as the guy who came before Sinatra. *Bing Crosby* is not constructed well enough for that, though Giddins certainly did have ample material to make something great, along the lines of Michael Holroyd's life of Shaw.

Instead of creating a story of this wonderful, often incredible life, Giddins has chosen to be exhaustive. Though not quite academic, he often borders on it, as he assumes time and again that we know as much about the Crosby B-sides of the 1930s as he does, or that we know who Rudolf Friml is. At other times, he can't restrain himself from plumping fact after fact, side-story after side-story, into what is just on the verge of becoming a compelling narrative....

But for the data-hungry, for those who are interested in a pretty full picture of American musical and popular culture during the years this book covers, and most of all, for Bingophiles who have endured years of abuse and neglect of the man they know in their hearts is the one who really deserves to be The King, this book is a treasure chest. Giddins seems to have interviewed just about everyone who's still alive, to have gone into every archive, to have listened to and watched every extant Bing production.

Though many of the items he spends so much time discussing are not practically available, the few that are bear out Giddins's observations and analyses. I was, for example, able to track down a copy of *The King of Jazz*, the 1930s variety-show picture that was Bing's first major film appearance. Giddins writes of his filmed performances with his first group, The Rhythm Boys, "With his double takes and mock solemnity, he is our contemporary, he winks at us across time."

I might not have noticed it without Giddins's cue, but he's absolutely right. Not only when compared to the Betty Boops and overly made-up effete pop tenors that populate the rest of the film (and its age), but even among his own Rhythm Boys, Bing stands out, as if he had been airbrushed in from decades later. And he stayed ahead of the pack, right up into the Forties and Fifties when his road movies with Bob Hope were as free and comfortable, as self-aware and ironic as an episode of *South Park*.

Giddins, whose previous books include bios of Louis Armstrong and Charlie Parker, has latched on to a project that has all the ingredients of a biographer's dream: an undeniably major figure who has fallen far enough out of the public's consciousness that a biography might prompt a renaissance. The fact that Giddins has, in his effort to be thorough, missed the opportunity of genuinely bringing Bing back to life the way only a well-wrought narrative could have done doesn't diminish his achievement. It just makes it more difficult to see.

Bert Archer

Finally, Ken Crossland sent me a long review by Terry Teachout which appeared in the April edition of *Commentary magazine* and this has a similar theme as it is headed *Whatever Happened to Bing Crosby?* Here are a few extracts.

How could so bright a star have dimmed so fast? Was there less to Bing Crosby than met the ear? Gary Giddins thinks not, and in *A Pocketful of Dreams* he makes the case for Crosby in unprecedentedly rich and rewarding detail. Though certain chapters could have been trimmed to useful effect (many readers will feel, for example, that far too much space is devoted to Crosby's less important films), the book as a whole is both finely written and thoroughly engrossing. Still, in telling the story of how Crosby became "a phenomenon in the cultural life of the United States," *A Pocketful of Dreams* occasionally dwells on the phenomenon at the expense of the artist. . .

BUT CROSBY paid a high price for allowing Jack Kapp to turn him into the musical equivalent of a Norman

Rockwell *Saturday Evening Post* cover. Jazz is not an absolute value, and the fact that Crosby's new style was less explicitly "jazzy" did not necessarily make it less good. (Nat "King" Cole, for example, became a better singer when he gave up jazz piano to concentrate on ballads.) The problem with the new Crosby was that his singing had become less vital, less compelling, less interesting. It was as though the loss of his high notes had also robbed him of his sense of musical adventure, his ability to surprise and delight the ear. The decline was not inexorable, and he would continue to make occasional memorable recordings well into the 1940's. For the most part, though, he was now singing - figuratively as well as literally - in a lower key.

Gary Giddins has mixed feelings about Crosby's change of style. "What his singing forfeited in muscularity," Giddins argues, "it gained in poignancy.. . . Bing in the mid-30's was the most quietly assured male pop singer alive." Yet he also admits that there was more to it than that:

(In singling out McCormack as a career template and encouraging Bing to deflect hot songs, [Kapp] hoped to remake him as a smoother, less mannered, ultimately less expressive singer, a kind of musical comfort food.) Crosby was now on the verge of reinventing common-denominator aesthetics, creating a national popular music that pleased everyone. The cost, in the opinion of many observers, was encroaching blandness.

The strengths and weaknesses of the new Crosby can be heard in the great ballads he recorded during World War II. "What's New?" (Johnny Burke and Bob Haggart, 1939), "Skylark" (Johnny Mercer and Hoagy Carmichael, 1942), "It Could Happen to You" (Burke and Jimmy Van Heusen, 1943), "Long Ago and Far Away" (Ira Gershwin and Jerome Kem, 1944), and "Out of This World" (Cole Porter, 1944) rank high among the outstanding love songs of the decade, and Crosby sang them all with taste and sensitivity. But his interpretations seem almost detached, lacking the energy and ardor one might reasonably expect from a comparatively young man. To hear them is to be put in mind of Father O'Malley, the amiable priest Crosby played in the 1944 movie *Going My Way*. Like the good father himself, Bing Crosby in the 40's sounded pleasant, engaging, humorous - and celibate.

By the 50's, a new generation of Americans was transferring its musical loyalties to a very different kind of singer. Frank Sinatra started out as a "high Crosby," but quickly developed into something more: singing with the big band of Tommy Dorsey, he brought to the ballads of the 40's a vulnerability that teenagers found irresistible. Like Crosby, he weathered a vocal crisis from which he emerged with a lower, darker voice, but it made him more rather than less interesting. The Sinatra of the 50's sang with a sharp edge of sexuality and aggression, while his youthful vulnerability deepened into a quality bordering at times on outright despair.

Sinatra's emotional candor stands in stark contrast to the impenetrable reserve of Crosby, who once famously told the lyricist Johnny Burke not to write songs for him that contained the phrase, "I love you." Unlike Sinatra, he was never a confessional artist, and the intensity he brought to his early recordings of ballads like "Stardust" was musical rather than dramatic. (To put it another way, he sang songs, not monologues.) Revealingly, he preferred the middle-of-the-road backing of John Scott Trotter's studio orchestras to the harder-swinging, harmonically sophisticated arrangements that Nelson Riddle created for such classic Sinatra albums of the 50's as *Songs for Swingin' Lovers and Only the Lonely.*

The 50's continue to be portrayed in the media as a decade of mindless conformity, but they were actually a time of considerable cultural volatility, nowhere more so than in popular music and jazz. While the comforting sound of Bing Crosby's balladry remained reassuring to many Americans, others were looking for something more emotionally challenging, and Sinatra's confessionalism, like the deceptively "cool" jazz of the trumpeter Miles Davis, suited their mood perfectly.

To the end of his life, Crosby continued to make records and appear on radio and TV, and he never lost his ability to swing. ("Bing had the beat, the absolute best time," said the drummer Jake Hanna. "You just followed him and he carried you right along.") But his way of making music had become unfashionable, and because the middle-aged Crosby was the only one whom younger listeners knew, they came to see him as a symbol of everything they held in contempt. As Giddins puts it:

He was known to [the postwar generation] as a faded and not especially compelling celebrity, a square old man who made orange-juice commercials and appeared with his much younger family on Christmas telecasts that the baby boomers never watched. .. .They would have been amazed to learn how advanced, savvy, and forceful a musician he had been in his prime.

Fortunately, the other Bing Crosby - the greater Crosby - lives again in the first half of *A Pocketful of Dreams,* and on the best of the hundreds of records he made between 1927 and 1936. "As far as I am concerned," Crosby said in 1960, "with the exception of a phonograph record or two, I don't think I have done anything that's really outstanding or great or marvelous or anything that deserves any superlatives." In fact, he was a nonpareil jazz singer who has been unfairly written out of the history of the music he helped to shape, as well as a balladeer of magical sensitivity and irresistible vitality. In helping to restore him to life, and despite certain deficiencies in musical understanding, Gary Giddins has done an inestimable service to American music.

Terry Teachout

Some contentious points here and there but overall it is very pleasing to read these in-depth and thoughtful reviews of Bing's work. Undoubtedly a factor in Bing being "forgotten" is that since his death there has been very little professional publicity about him. Many of the members of the various Crosby clubs have done their bit but Bing did not have a full-time agent or record company working to exploit his work as has Elvis Presley. Bob Hope's family has set up an office which encourages projects about Bob and the Sinatra family too all seem be helping to keep Frank's image topical. In the circumstances, Gary Giddins has done more than most to bring Bing back into the public eye.

It continues to amaze me that Little Brown have not issued Gary's book in the UK. My offer to obtain it for UK members (via the Internet) remains but of course the general public are missing their chance to buy the book. If any of you would like to complain about the situation, write to Alison Lindsay, Director of Marketing, Little Brown and Co., Brettenham House, Lancaster Place, London WC2E 7EN (phone: 0207 911 8062, e-mail: alison.lindsay@littlebrown.com)

However, as we went to press, we saw that Amazon in the UK were advertising a 432 page paperback version of Gary's book at a price of £7.99. This was to be published by Pocket Books on December 1st and the ISBN number is 0671713086. This is good news if it's correct so please check with your local book shop and quote the ISBN number. It would make a nice Christmas present! I do not know what has been omitted to reduce the pages from the original total of 728 but possibly it is the source notes, discography, bibliography and index.

Also, arising from Gary's book, station KCCK-88.3FM (a facility of Kirkwood Community College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa) began a 13-week Thursday night series on Bing on October 11 which will continue until the first week of January 2002. The programmes are aired at 6:00 p.m. (CDT/CST) and can be heard on the Internet at www.kcck.org
The news release stated, inter alia:

The impetus for the 13-week series is Gary Giddins' large and well-researched biography of Bing Crosby's early life and career. The book has been well received and has generated some renewed interest in the singer. It is surprising that a star of major proportions (larger than Elvis, Sinatra, the Beatles or anyone else in popular music in the 20th century) was so soon an obscure figure.

Interesting to note the same theme about Bing being forgotten. We must build on this for his centenary year, which brings us nicely to:

The Centenary Campaign

As we look ahead to the centenary of Bing's birth in 2003, it has been suggested that we ought to have an action plan to make sure that the maximum amount of publicity is generated and that we bring back Bing to the public's notice as much as is possible in the twenty-first century. What follows are ideas and suggestions and we need members to volunteer to help with the actions needed. New ideas will be welcomed too. We are however conscious that in all types of clubs, there is a core of 5% of the membership which makes things happen while the remainder are mainly passive. This is not a criticism but it is merely a fact of life. There is no reason why our club should be any different but if we can get just 10% of our membership contributing to our efforts to have a major push to promote Bing in the next year or so, we shall have a real success on our hands.

We start with a sound foundation as much work is already on going, for example that undertaken by:-

1. CDs - Wig Wiggins with Universal (formerly MCA) in the USA, Jim Reilly with Universal in the UK, David Currington with Universal in Australia. Ken Barnes as an independent. John McNicholas with his Jonzo series.

2. Radio - Ernest Sutkowski, Jay Diamond, Arne Fogel and others in the USA, Stan White and Maggie Ryan in the UK, Ron Field, Bob Neate, John Funnell and Bill Bennett in Australia.

3. Books - Gary Giddins book has received widespread publicity, Norman Wolfe has a good book ready to be published, Wig Wiggins has prepared a new discography and my diary is being published by Scarecrow Press.

4. DVDs - Ken Barnes is working on some Crosby issues for the UK with *Road to Rio* being negotiated at present.

5. Hofstra event - Wig is working closely with organisers.

So how do we build on this? In the UK, if the government is considering legislation, it issues a 'green paper' to solicit comment and then this is translated into a 'white paper' which is then debated and passed by Parliament. A similar 'green paper' exercise has now been done with thirty-two key players in the Crosbyana field and the outline plan below has been revised in line with the comments and suggestions received.

PURPOSE - to improve Bing's profile in the entertainment business, to build on the success of Gary Giddins' book and increase the focus on Bing ahead of the centenary of his birth in May 2003.

ACTIONS PROPOSED

(a) Audio
CDs

1. Wig Wiggins has drawn the attention of Universal in the USA to Bing's centenary but sadly it appears that they have no plans to commemorate it.

2. Jim Reilly has drawn the attention of Universal in the UK to Bing's centenary but they too seem reluctant to do anything about it. Jim suggests that we write to Universal asking if they have any objection to other companies licensing their tracks. The possibility of the ICC licensing tracks was also discussed but it was thought that this might not be viable commercially as we lack the sales outlets.

3. David Currington to draw the attention of Universal in Australia to Bing's centenary and seek their plans to commemorate it.

4. Regarding Bing's recordings for other labels, we need help from members with the following:

Can Ken Barnes get Seasons issued on CD? Any chance of the Poems appearing? Ensure long awaited BMG CDs issued.

Capitol in the USA - someone to write with suggestions? (Extracts from *That Travellin' Two Beat, Bing and Louis, Man on Fire, Phil Crosby tracks?, Do*

You Hear What I Hear, The Great Country Hits?)

Get unissued sing along issued - who owns this? Greg Van Beek tried to find out via Bob Thompson's son without success. Suspect either Warner Brothers or Columbia have it. (David Currington thinks it may be Capitol).

Columbia - they purchased Project Records. *(Say One For Me, Straight Down the Middle, How The West Was Won).* They have reissued *The Bing Crosby Story, Vol.* 1 recently following the Gary Giddins book.

Golden Records - childrens albums. How do we contact this company or its successors?

Verve - *Bing Sings While Bregman Swings.* Reissued recently due to Gary Giddins book.

RCA - *Bing With A Beat. (Fancy Meeting You Here* has just been reissued on the RCA Bluebird label)

Reprise / Warner Brothers - much material in their files. Concepts needed. (America I Hear You Singing / 12 Songs of Christmas / Return to Paradise / Reprise Repertory / various singles, some unissued / Sing-a-longs / I Wish You a Merry Christmas)

United Artists - to reissue their material? Ken Barnes to draw their attention to the Centenary?

MGM - El Senor Bing, Bing and Louis, The Second Time Around.

Amos Records re *Hey Jude.* Who to contact?

Daybreak Records (part RCA?) re *Bing 'N' Basie, A Time To Be Jolly.* Who to contact?

BBC - *The Final Chapter* and other material in their files. E-mail sent to William Naylor of BBC (*Walk On By* team) and he put me in contact with Roly Keating, Head of Arts programmes but he did not reply to my e-mail. Separate letter sent re *The Final Chapter* and also Stan White is alerting an independent record company about the album as they do sometimes license material from the BBC.

Jasmine - Geoff Milne has completed *Going Hollywood* vol. 3 for 2001 release and will be working on vol. 4 in due course. A possible Bing country & western CD is being considered..

Longines? Who owns the tracks?

Pickwick? Draw their attention to the centenary and encourage them to reissue their *Thoroughly Modern Bing* album.

Disney (Goldilocks, plus Sleepy Hollow songs?) They won't accept ideas. Write with request?

Early Brunswick? Out of copyright so independent record companies (e.g. Rhino) could put together issues. They probably need ideas for compilations. Which companies should be approached? Jim Reilly already in touch with ASV and suggestions submitted. Stan White advises that Avid will release a special CD of Bing material for the centenary. Other ideas for compilations? A CD linked to Gary Giddins book might be appropriate. Contact John Newton (Personality on Parade series) and David Kiner to see if they have any plans? Paul Taylor Choristers material - any progress?

I have written to the BEAR FAMILY people but no response has been received as yet.

We are asked not to seek additional publicity for the Jonzo series.

6. Select Circles, Footlight, Collectors Choice, The Record Centre, Tower Records, Virgin, HMV (any more?) - to be made aware of Centenary so that they can use this in their own marketing efforts.

Radio - all existing actions to continue. More members to help. Major stations to be encouraged to mount special features on Bing. Who should be approached and when? Need help with USA and Canada radio stations.

Stan White has contacted Desmond Carrington re a special centenary tribute and Desmond is submitting a proposal to the BBC for a series of six one hour programmes. Desmond's producer, Dave Aylott has been in touch with me and once they get a go-ahead from the BBC, he will visit me for ideas on the format. (Also keep in mind BBC 15 part series from 1978 plus possible involvement of Roy Oakshott). Trevor Wagstaff has suggested getting Bing's photo on the front of the Radio Times as part of any broadcast tribute. I have also written to a Kevin Howlett, an independent radio producer about a radio tribute. FACT (per Trevor Wagstaff) "Bing Crosby heard over the BBC airwaves more than any other singer in the 20th century" (quote regularly). Attempt to have Bing as Radio 2 artist of the week (May 3, 2003).

Arthur Blood will contact Radio Derby re a special tribute to Bing around the centenary date.

Maggie Ryan suggests an approach to Sarah Kennedy of BBC Radio 2 as she is a Bing fan.

Trevor Wagstaff suggests a special tribute by the Cliff Adams Singers "Sing Something Crosby" similar to the one broadcast on December 25, 1994.

Ken Crossland, Jim Reilly and Seamus Kelly to seek air time through their various contacts? Jazz FM to be approached? For other Ken Crossland suggestions, see Letters section.

Jim Reilly will continue making programmes on Bing for Angel Community Radio.

Keith Parkinson will contact Spencer Leigh at Radio Merseyside. (Keith suggests that November 2002 would be the time to contact the radio stations and says that we should all be ready to take our own CDs along as cassette tapes are not always welcome.)

I will contact GMR in Manchester.

Special CD to be prepared by a member with a CD writer for issue to all radio stations with full details of songs for Recording Rights purposes?

David Currington to prepare Community Radio tribute and also special programme for Sydney and satellite stations of their weekly nostalgia radio show in Australia.

Publish list in magazine of correct addresses for members to write re Bing season of songs / films. Help from members would be particularly appreciated with this.

(b) Visual

Internet - to be based on Steven Lewis's site. Get Steven's site linked with more related sites?

Advise major news web-sites (AP, Reuters etc.) of centenary. Give link to Bing Crosby Internet Museum.

DVDs / Video

Contact Universal in USA with suggestions (through Wig?). Bob Hope will be celebrating his centenary too and a reissue of the Road films still owned by Paramount

would seem to be a 'must'.

Contact MGM re *High Society, Man on Fire and Going Hollywood. (and Starnight at the Cocoanut Grove?)*

ditto other film companies and TV companies.

Ken Barnes, independent - various issues planned in UK. First one is *Road to Rio* with supplementary items packaged with it such as *The South Bank Show.* Ken is talking about *Pennies From Heaven* too.

Bing - Life and Legend to be re-issued on DVD? Greg Van Beek did have talks with a Los Angeles based firm about this some years ago. Can he revive this dialogue?

Pasadena concert / other TV shows / Kathryn Crosby apparently has the rights. Can George O'Reilly seek her views about reissuing some? Do the family have any plans to celebrate Bing's centenary with any special projects? Would they object to more of the Buddy Cole material having new backgrounds added as Ernest Sutkowski is interested in pursuing this.

Hollywood Palace compilation?

TV programmes

Contact TV stations. AMC to have a special season? Re-run old programmes - run special on Bing's life for 2003. Have season of Bing's films shown? (Jim Reilly interested in writing to UK TV companies). Stan White suggests contacting Katherine Macmillan at WTTW (Channel 11) Chicago, 5400 North St. Louis Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60625 (312-583-5000) to see if they will repeat their "Remembering Bing" special from 1987. Can the old TV shows of Bing be repeated by the Nostalgia channel? (see Wig's reviews in 1995/6)

Mini series - ABC, CBS or NBC? THIS IS PROBABLY THE MOST IMPORTANT THING WE CAN DO TO PROMOTE THE CENTENARY. I wrote to ABC first in view of the recent Judy Garland series and letters have also been sent to CBS. NBC does not accept unsolicited ideas and I have therefore sought the assistance of a literary agent in New York but without success so far. If not a mini-series for Bing alone, how about a joint one with Bob Hope?

BBC in the UK to be approached to prepare special and / or repeat existing material. E-mail sent to Roly Keating, Head of Arts programmes. Can the Parkinson shows (or an amalgam of them) be shown?

Independent Television network in UK - It is understood that ITC still have the Pasadena show in their files. Get this re-shown?

Jim Reilly to contact Chrysalis TV re special on Bing. Australia - David Currington to get his members to write to the national broadcasters?

Books

Gary Giddins (promote his book)

Norman Wolfe (find him a publisher)

Bing Crosby - Day by Day (Scarecrow Press - being published now. Push them hard to promote it)

Magazine / newspaper articles

Write to all major newspapers drawing their attention to the Centenary. Variety / Billboard / Downbeat to be approached.

Prepare syndicated article for members to send to magazines and local newspapers? Which magazines / newspapers? (UK - Saga, Yours, Evergreen, etc.?). Members to write to their local papers (prepare specimen letter?)

Solicit 100th anniversary tributes in National press.

Major collectors to seek press coverage for their collections? (Greg Van Beek has been dodging a local reporter but may weaken in 2003)

Gord Atkinson to mention centenary in his column for Canadian newspaper? Who else do we have in the media who could help?

Roger Osterholm to prepare article for his media contacts.

Guinness Book of Records - Pete Cakanic and Trevor Wagstaff to continue campaign to get many of Bing's achievements recognised in the book.?

Stamps - USA to reissue Bing stamp? Notice already put on Bing Crosby Internet Museum for fans to write to appropriate body.

What about Antigua, The Grenadines and Mali reissuing their stamps? Who to contact them? Arthur Blood will prepare a special centenary stamp.

(c) Other

HOFSTRA event - publicise this widely as the start of the Crosby Centenary celebrations and support as much as possible.

Gonzaga celebration for May 2003 - Correspondence underway between Malcolm Macfarlane and Father Spitzer, President of Gonzaga and the idea of a Crosby Centennial Celebration is supported. Arrangements being progressed with Stephanie Plowman.

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences held a major celebration dinner for Gary Cooper in May 2001. Bombard them with requests for a similar event for Bing. I have written an initial letter. The Academy's address is Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Academy Foundation, 8949 Wilshire Boulevard, Beverly Hills, CA 90211-1972

UK celebration? Australian celebration? European celebration? Irish celebration?

Publicity to be arranged for all events.

I have written to Kathryn Crosby seeking her views on the centenary celebrations but no reply has been received.

Greg Van Beek to contact Bob Hope's publicist to draw his attention to Bing's centenary.

Golf - Pebble Beach. Make sure that they are aware of centenary and use the information as publicity.

Horse racing - Del Mar - Santa Anita. Make sure that they are aware of centenary and use the information as publicity.

Baseball - Pittsburgh Pirates. Make sure that they are aware of centenary and use the information as publicity.

Spokane, Tacoma and Elko to recognise the anniversary?

Bing Crosby Information File to be issued to all people contacted?

Library of Congress? Bob Hope has had a special event there recently. Contact them re a special Crosby event?

Special Bing centenary note paper to be produced?

Special Bing postcard? (Stan White looking into this)

Special bumper issue of the magazine? All members to pay £2 ($3) more to cover cost? (Eric Jackson suggestion)

Centenary Calendar? Ties and badges?

Keith Parkinson to make a presentation about Bing to the Lancashire branch of the Sinatra Music Society in May 2003. ICC fliers to be available at such meetings?

Seamus Kelly to continue his talks to various clubs in the Midlands.

I intend to seek speaking engagements about Bing in my locality. (Revisit organisations previously addressed?)

Trevor Wagstaff undertakes to lay a wreath on behalf of the ICC membership at the Bing Crosby Memorial Plaque at the London Palladium on May 3, 2003. (media coverage desirable)

Any volunteers to pick up any of the above? Any thoughts on the timings of these various actions? Please feedback to me.

My thanks to those who have responded with suggestions. We badly need the help of as many members as possible to make many of the ideas and suggestions a reality. Please volunteer to undertake any specific task which appeals to you. No one person can make Bing's centenary a success but the Crosbyana movement as a whole can really make 2003 something special. I hope these ideas will help to start a "revolution."

Malcolm Macfarlane

BING, PHIL AND SATCHMO AT THE HOLLYWOOD PALACE

First let's ask Wig to set the scene:
Richard Zimmerman of La Canada, California, became an ICC member earlier this year. In the process of his joining, I learned that, as a young man, Richard had appeared for four years in the 1960s as a member of various professional singing groups in the California area, one of which was known as "The Young Americans". Richard also told me that one of the highest points in his life was an appearance with "The Young Americans" on the Hollywood Palace along with Bing, Phil Harris and Louis Armstrong back in September 1965. The program was a special celebration of Satchmo's 50th anniversary in show business.

I asked Richard to write down his impressions of that Hollywood Palace program for BING magazine and here are his fond recollections of that unique experience.

Bing Crosby Hosts Louis Armstrong's 50th Year in Show Business

By Richard Zimmerman

No matter how many times you experience it, there is no "high" in life quite like the adrenaline-surge in your body as you stand waiting behind a curtain to open upon the stage of a TV variety show. The orchestra goes into the intro for your song. You hear the long, sustaining roll on the timpani drums. The string section is coming in on a single-note trill.

Then you hear the brass building in pitch and volume when suddenly the curtain opens to reveal a truly awesome sight. At least it was an awesome sight for me to see late that Friday afternoon, September 3, 1965, when the curtain opened on the stage of the ABC TV variety show, Hollywood Palace.

Standing about 15 feet to my left is big-bandleader Phil Harris. Standing about 12 feet to my right is show business legend Louis Armstrong. And standing center-stage about eight feet in front of me to my left is the entertainer I most admire in life - Bing Crosby. In fact, he is the one entertainer with whom I most wanted to perform when I made up my mind to become a performance artist slightly more than four years earlier.

Back then in seventh grade, I could usually be found indoors while most other kids my age were outdoors. They were often playing in some sort of sport while I was ceaselessly playing records and trying to improve my singing voice - usually to the recordings of Mr. Crosby. But back then I never dared dream this experience would come about quite so quickly or be quite so awesome.

I have long since forgotten the names of most of the groups with whom I performed back then. Just as I have forgotten most of the professional names under which I performed as a soloist by the time of the Palace telecast. But many of the details of this one show are forever at the forefront of my memory, rich and clear as if they took place only yesterday. For this is an historical telecast being taped within an historical month.

This particular Palace is going to be publicized in the TV viewing guides as "Bing Crosby hosts Louis Armstrong's fiftieth year in show business." We are taping this show the last week of a month that opens with news reports of UFO sightings throughout numerous Southern states. On Monday, August 30, the first day of our week-long rehearsal schedule, Casey Stengel steps down as manager of the New York Mets. And the previous Friday, a performer

named Bob Dylan - who also changed his name from Zimmerman - is scoring big album sales with his first rock recordings. Less than a month earlier, he had been booed by an audience at the Newport Folk Festival where he had abandoned his traditional folk songs of protest against the war in Vietnam.

But little public attention is focused upon any of these things because slightly more than a week ago several days of violence in East Los Angeles end in what is now being called "The Watts Riot." Amid lingering uneasiness throughout the city, an extremely large crowd is lined up out front of the ABC Palace Theater on Vine about one-half block north of Hollywood Blvd. Making my way down an iron fire escape on the south side of the theater where the second and third-story dressing rooms are located, I'm amazed to see so many people waiting to get in to the late-afternoon taping of the dress rehearsal. I walk past dozens and dozens of people looking for my best friend, Mike. I got him three tickets so he could bring our girlfriends.

Suddenly I hear a voice call out, "Hey, Rick." Seconds after I said hello to him and the girls he started saying, "Just think - in a few minutes you're going to be standing before the TV cameras that will show you to 20 million people." He was trying to see if I would show any signs of nervousness. But as he was talking I could feel the adrenaline coursing through my body. I had never felt so excited in my life, and I just could not wait to get back inside with the show underway.

"You're right!" I say over my shoulder as I dart off back towards the fire escape. Less than an hour later the full-dress rehearsal is being taped. I don't remember now all of the songs performed. But I do remember that after two or three, I am performing with Mr. Crosby a moderately obscure song of the time called *Happiness Is.* He had had a special arrangement made, complete with key changes that move one-half step upwards after every chorus. And the original lackluster verses are rewritten into clever new lyrics about various celebrities. I always liked the up-beat melody, so I still remember some phrases, like this one:

> To a waiter, it's a tip, tip, tip,
> To Dean Martin, it's a nip, nip, nip.
> To a jockey, it's a nag, nag, nag,
> And to a G.I., it's a Bob Hope gag.

When the Bob Hope line comes up in the dress rehearsal and the final performance, both audiences emit a sustained "Aaaaaaaw" that everyone up on stage can clearly hear above the ongoing music.

Through part of this song, Mr. Crosby is seated on a stool. On the floor around him are several young female singers with their arms around the bottoms of his legs. One day at rehearsal, Lisa, one of the girls, had found a hole in one of his pant cuffs. She put her finger through it and wiggled it around while laughing out loud for all to see. He just smiled and paid no attention.

While standing behind him for part of this number I often think he has a poor tailor. Even his performance clothes look - in a word - "baggy." When I tell my folks about this one night, my mother says he always had a reputation over the years for being a bad dresser. And yet his loose-fitting garments may be the result of nothing more than him being on a diet at the time - something my current age has much experience with. Back then, however, that thought never occurs to the 17-year-old mind in my 145-pound body.

But nothing can diminish my admiration for the man, an entertainer whose popularity after a half-century in show business is still strong enough for a major TV network to have him host its top-rated variety program more times than any other performer. A news magazine had reported that the typical longevity of a show business act back then was about three years (today the typical longevity is measured in months). And I remember thinking that in spite of his incredible vocal ability, Bing Crosby's real talent was in being able to make himself liked as much as he had by successive generations.

At 62, his voice is deep, full and every bit as resonant as it was for any performance at any time in his career. Watching him whenever possible, it seems to me as though it is just so effortless on his part. His head tilts back slightly, the jaw drops and out comes this incredible sound unlike any voice before or since.

On Monday, the first day of rehearsal, everyone takes turns on stage recording all the numbers with the full orchestra. For the remainder of the week the daily rehearsing is performed to the prerecorded sound which is constantly stopped and rewound while the Director and the TV camera people work the show out visually from various angles. The orchestra will not reappear until the dress rehearsal late the following Friday afternoon.

On variety programs of this time there is a short break on the day before dress rehearsals. This allows newcomers to briefly kibitz with the stars. Like me, everyone in that show could hardly wait to return from their dressing rooms with some memento for these stars to autograph. In my case, I had brought along the record jacket from *Robin and the Seven Hoods* on which Mr. Crosby is centered between Sinatra, Martin, Davis and Peter Falk. When he reaches out to sign it for me, I just cannot resist telling him the many number of times I had gone to see the film.

"Myyyyyy," he says in that familiar low-baritone voice as he drops his head and looks at me from out of the top of his eyes, "but you are a brave soul." On the soundtrack recording of *Style,* his voice can be clearly heard speaking after the song concludes: "Come on, let's get some clothes on or we'll be late for breakfast." A passing comment from me about this remark only brings a bewildered expression from him.

Standing there, less than four feet from him as he signs the album and hands it back to me, I am thinking how authentic his hairpiece appears. No one unaware of the truth would ever have suspected it is not his real hair. But overall, the one aspect I find truly remarkable about his appearance is that he has the most youthful-looking eyes I have ever seen in any person. Either before or since, I have never seen such bright blue irises surrounded by such large, pure white sclera. They are totally devoid of any red blood vessels, which is probably why Phil Harris comments at one point that Bing should not worry his "baby-blues."

Misters Crosby and Harris have some comic patter they perform together at one point. And I am so happy that on Thursday, the last day before dress rehearsal, there seems to be endless equipment problems. Over and over again the Director's voice bellows out from the control room speaker: "One more time from the top, please."

The two seasoned veterans then redo all the punchlines, complete with feigned laughter and totally rehearsed "ad libs." And every time they make it sound as though they are just having a casual, impromptu conversation in someone's living room. It is quite an on-the-job education for those of us present from the younger set.

Unlike most of the younger performers, I had made it my job to research the careers of seasoned veterans with whom I hoped to work one day. So I am fully-aware of Mr. Crosby's largely unknown involvement in more or less bankrolling the experiments of a sound engineer with whom he later created the company and products of AMPEX. More than any other company, AMPEX was responsible for moving the recording industry away from recording onto wax disks when it perfected a new and more efficient medium of recording onto magnetic tape. This technological development soon brought about both high-fidelity sound and stereophonic recording.

While it was true that, at the time, Mr. Crosby's involvement was self-serving because he was perhaps the one recording artist that stood to gain the most if these experiments were successful, something else was also true. The successful results of those experiments were made available to every other recording artist when Mr. Crosby easily could have insisted the new technology be utilized only for his own recordings.

Watching the backstage TV monitor as Misters Crosby and Harris repeat their routine over and over again, I think about how all the technology surrounding us there in the Palace Theater is an outgrowth of what AMPEX had achieved. The very magnetic tape upon which all our images image are now being recorded might not have evolved into color video tape if Mr. Crosby had not funded those experiments years earlier. And many of the television extras that we take for granted today, such as delayed telecasts, the archiving of performers' entire careers and the instant replay of sporting events may have come into existence many years later if it had not been for this man's faith in the future of recording technology.

At the Friday morning rehearsal I remember becoming aware that two people are sitting in seats about half-way back where the audience will be sitting in the late afternoon. During the numbers with different lighting I become more aware these two people are female - one taller than the other. A

little later on, both of these females walk up onto the stage. As they take a place next to Mr. Crosby and start chatting with him I get my first good look at them. That's when I realize the shorter one is Bing's daughter, Mary, a truly lovely young girl. And the taller one is his wife, Kathryn.

I stand there in love with her, knowing that if she even once looks my way I will suddenly have the appearance of a puppy with his ears going back. But at no time does she ever look at even one person other than her husband.

This Friday is also the first day that Louis Armstrong appears at rehearsal, primarily for camera placement and sound levels. Mr. Armstrong was age 65 at the time. A number of the younger performers think the network is especially insensitive to his physical condition, for he had been given a dressing room on the second floor. To reach it, he has to slowly labor up two floors of thin metal steps. I remember on the day of kibitz, my request for Mr. Armstrong's autograph turns an expression of pain upon his face into that wonderful smile. His smile could cause the sun to shine, even indoors. After he graciously signs my album, I watch him take very short and slow steps towards the dressing room stairs. His head is bowed forward, and it seems to take him forever to reach the second floor. But as far as I know, he never once complains to a soul about not having a first-floor dressing room. I shall always remember him as the quintessential gentleman of charm, grace, personality, humor and - most of all - talent.

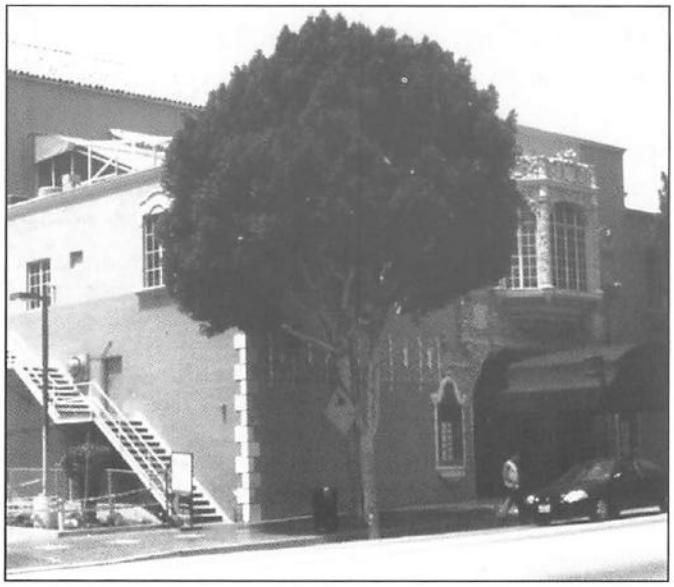
He and Mr. Crosby perform something together, which I have since forgotten. But what I will never forget is the closing finale, in which everyone on the show takes part. Talk about a show-stopper, the closing number is *South Rampart Street Parade*. A wonderful series of interlaced melodies and counterpoints composed by Ray Bauduc and Bob Haggart with lyrics by Steve Allen, the entire composition conveys the feeling of an oncoming parade building in volume and rhythm. Only this arrangement has something no street parade ever has - a studio orchestra with a string section. Added to this layered complexity are the jazz "fills" of Mr. Armstrong's horn and numerous sections of syncopated rhythm.

Wow, what an experience!

There are many unforgettable musical moments I can look back on. But if I had to select one that approaches a spiritual level of magic, it would be this one. I've heard many versions of *Parade* over the years. The Boston Pops arrangement conducted by Arthur Fiedler comes in a close-second, with a later version conducted by John Williams a close-third. Yet the only version I ever heard to which the word "awesome" can truly be applied, is the one I am honored to be a very small part of on this Palace telecast.

Six years later in 1971, Louis Armstrong will die the same year Rod Serling writes something that will take me back to my Palace experience. It is a line Bill Windom delivers in the *Night Gallery* episode, *They're Tearing Down Tim Riley's Bar.*

"Rest in peace you age of innocence, you beautiful, serene, carefree...looooooong summer night. We shall not look upon your likes again."



Still in constant use as a studio, the Hollywood Palace as it looks today

AFTERWORD

After reading Richard's behind-the-scenes report about this Hollywood Palace program, I asked him if any of the pre-recorded music had been used during the actual telecast. He replied very quickly, "Absolutely not!" The entire performance was done live, with the full orchestra, and Bing, Phil and Louis worked without cue cards or any other type of prompting. And definitely no lip synching to pre-recorded tapes, either! They certainly don't do live television programs like that anymore. As a matter of fact, they don't even do variety shows like the Hollywood Palace anymore. And we are all very much poorer as a result, in my opinion.

F. B. (Wig) Wiggins

TRADING POST

Entries are free for all items of Crosbyana and there is a nominal charge of £2 for non-Crosby advertisements. All items are printed in good faith and we cannot accept responsibility for any dissatisfaction arising from the transaction as a result of these entries
Please send all advertisements to the Editor

Arthur Blood, 597 Osmaston Rd., Derby DE24 8NE, UK

Arthur has available the new Bing Christmas 2001 stamp at £3 per 20 inclusive of postage to UK members. USA members can order from Wig Wiggins, price $5 for 20. Also Arthur has produced a nice Bing key ring which is shown below. This can be purchased for £2.50, direct from Arthur.

Mr. L. Boss, 41 Wesley Drive, Banbury, Oxfordshire, OX16 9LS, UK (tel. 01295 257208)

Mr. Boss seeks offers for BING magazine #48, issued in November 1977. This was the excellent and emotional "farewell to Bing" issue, put together by Reg Bristo and containing 54 pages.

Charles Culley, 25 The Curlews, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk IP33 2NL, UK

Charles is seeking a copy of Kathryn Crosby's book "My Life With Bing." Please contact him direct if you can help.

William Elliott, 3564 Santiago Way, Naples, Florida 34105, USA (tel. 941-434-0937)

BING CROSBY LPs FOR SALE

Bill Elliott has been a Crosby fan since Bing's early days as the Cremo Singer in 1931. He has decided to offer his extensive collection of Bing's 10 inch and 12 inch LPs for sale to other interested ICC members. Included are the complete set of Spokane albums, many of the Crosbyana series from Australia, all of the Broadway and Totem LPs and the full set of "Bing's Hollywood" LPs. Bill has a total of 350 LPs for sale at reasonable prices. For full details, contact Bill direct

Festival Films, 6115 Chestnut Terrace, Shorewood, MN 55331, USA (Tel: [952] 470-2172, e-mail: FesFilms@aol.com)

Ron Hall's company has many Bing videos (NTSC only) available plus many Bing film poster reproductions. Contact Ron for details or look at the web site at www.fesfilms.com

Owen Mackin, 22 Chatsworth Square, Carlisle, UK (Tel: 01228 524023).

Mr. Mackin has 24 Bing LPs and 24 Bing 78s for sale. Please contact him direct.

Timothy A. Morgereth, 5 Beach Drive, Inverness, Baltimore, Maryland 21222-4925, USA

Tim's *Vintage Research Archive* contains a vast number of video tapes (NTSC only) and audio cassettes of Bing material and other artists such as Perry Como. Contact Tim with your wants.

Richard Selwood, The Den, Abbotsfield, Wiveliscombe, Somerset TA4 2SU, UK.
(e-mail: jolsonresearch@btinternet.com)

Richard has radio show LPs and CDs for sale/exchange. Many Bing Crosby, Jolson, Durante, Philco, Chesterfield, Kraft etc. Send for list from Richard.

F. B. (Wig) Wiggins, 5608 North 34th Street, Arlington, Virginia 22207, USA (tel: (703) 241-5608; e-mail: jlwiggins@erols.com)

"AND HERE'S BING!"

An American ICC member would like to obtain a copy of this now out of print book by Lionel Pairpoint about Bing's radio career. Anyone with a copy for sale is asked to contact Wig.

Stan Woodford, 6 Mariam Gardens, Hornchurch, Essex RM12 6QA, UK (tel. 01708 445049)

Stan has on offer many VHS (UK format) video items and film song compilations of Bing that may be of interest. SAE for lists please.

BING BINDERS

Keep your magazines in mint condition by storing them in these specially made binders. They have blue covers with BING in gold on the spine and hold 10 copies, which allow them to either be inserted or removed, yet also open flat for easy reading. Costing £6.99 inc postage, £7.99 to Europe, £8.99 elsewhere, they are available from Ken Mason, 12 Wycomb Grove, Melton Mowbray, Leics. LE13 1EQ

Crosby Clubs Around The World

The ICC is pleased to be associated with the following Crosby organisations.

Bing's Friends And Collectors Society,
Hobie and Cathie Wilson, 236 Andrieux St., Sonoma, California 95476-6909, USA (tel. 707 996 0257 - e-mail Erinssmile@earthlink.net - Web Site address http://home.earthlink.net/~erinssmile/

The club has just celebrated its twentieth anniversary and it issues a sixteen page newsletter every two months. The annual subscription is $12 (USA) and $16 (outside the USA).

Club Crosby, BINGANG
Wayne L. Martin, Editor
435 So. Holmes Ave., Kirkwood, Missouri 63122, USA
(e-mail: ClubCrosby@aol.com)

The club issues a sixty page magazine twice a year. Subscriptions are $12 (USA and Canada) and $18 for Australia, New Zealand and South America. Members in Europe should enrol via Ken Crossland, 9 Arden Drive, Dorridge, Solihull, B93 8LP - subscription £12.

The Victorian Bing Crosby Society
Bob Neate, 22 Pakenham St., Blackburn, Victoria, Australia 3130. (tel. [03] 9877 1983)

The club issues a newsletter every two months and holds regular film nights. This year they have shown "Road to Utopia", "Too Much Harmony" and "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court".

Internet sites:
Bing Crosby Internet Museum:
www.kcmetro.cc.mo.us/~crosby/
This is a wonderful site which carries up-to-date news and has a lively discussion board. Not to be missed.
The Immortal Talents of Bing Crosby
http://www.geocities.com/crissi_n/bing.html

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OTHER APPRECIATION SOCIETIES
We have reciprocal arrangements with the following clubs and societies for publicity purposes. They kindly advertise our club in their magazines and we are very pleased to return the favour.
Sinatra Music Society, c/o Margaret Cummings, 36 Hillcrest Rd., Wylde Green, Sutton Coldfield B72 1EN, UK (tel: 0121-350-0683)

This Society produces a most impressive magazine on a bi-monthly basis and includes features on all artistes performing quality popular music. The annual sub for UK members is £12. Web site address: www.sinatra-ms.com

Sinatra Music Society, Dublin Branch, c/o Chris Hitchcock, 21 Roselawn Walk, Dublin 15, Ireland (phone: 01 8212418)
Tony Bennett Appreciation Society, c/o Mark Fox, 13 Sunnyside, Heckmondwike, W. Yorks WF16 0LN, UK
Pat Boone Appreciation Society, P. O. Box 63, Sunderland, SR1 1PN, UK
The Doris Day Society, 31 Kirkfield Rise, Ambleside, Cumbria LA22 9DX, UK
The Deanna Durbin Society, c/o Mrs. Jutta Fagan, 13 Mayfair Court, Mayfair Close, The Ave, Beckenham, Kent BR3 5EL, UK
Frankie Laine International Appreciation Society, c/o Tony Cooper, 18 Napier Crescent, Seamer, Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO12 4HY, UK (phone / fax 01723 863022 - email:tony@flias.globalnet.co.uk)
The Dean Martin Association, P. O. Box 80, Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 1ZR, UK

Joel Whitburn's *A Century of Pop Music*

In BING#128, I gave some statistics about Perry Como's top hits as compared with Elvis and the Beatles which I took from Joel Whitburn's "A Century of Pop Music". Following this, I had an e-mail from Carmela Amari of New York which read as follows:

> I've been a huge Bing Fan and a member of the ICC for over a year now. I love BING magazine! I only have two complaints; You never print any of my letters and #2 whenever you mention the record holders in music, you always mention Elvis and the Beatles. Did you know that Elton John broke some records also? He was the Bing Crosby of the past three and a half decades. Also he has the most Billboard hits and is around a lot longer than Elvis and the Beatles. Every time Elton comes in concert I get to meet him. I hope one day to get to talk to him about Bing and how he was an influence to him. I LOVE BING MAGAZINE! Keep up the great work you do, for it is greatly appreciated!

Well, Carmela certainly has a point about Elton John. According to the Whitburn book, Elton had fourteen top hits in the period between 1973 and 1999. Indeed Elton was ranked the second most successful recording star of the 1970s by Whitburn behind the Bee Gees.

Jim Kukura of New Jersey did some most interesting statistical research on other Whitburn books some years ago and following in his footsteps, it may be helpful to supply some facts and figures from this latest book.

The book is shaped around the top 40 hits of each year using a ranking system based on the position achieved and number of weeks in the Billboard charts. There is a list of the top forty hits for each year plus summaries for each decade, a list of all the songs included and then a list of the individual artists and their hits. A points system is used for the rankings for each decade and the results for the century are:

		points
1900-1909	Billy Murray	5878
1910-1919	Henry Burr	5473
1920-1929	Paul Whiteman	7356
1930-1939	Bing Crosby	5608
1940-1949	Bing Crosby	4973
1950-1959	Elvis Presley	2164
1960-1969	The Beatles	2905
1970-1979	Bee Gees	1478
1980-1989	Michael Jackson	1456
1990-1999	Mariah Carey	2690

No one comes near Bing's dominance of two decades and there are also lists of top artists by half century.

1900-1949

Bing Crosby	10,581 points
Billy Murray	9,017
Paul Whiteman	8,969
Henry Burr	8,009
Byron Harlan	7,507

1950-1999

Elvis Presley	3,425 points
The Beatles	3,210
Mariah Carey	2,690
Madonna 2,528	
Michael Jackson	2,288

(Elton John is tenth with 1,878)

Sometimes we think that Bing has been forgotten by the current generations but how do we feel about Billy Murray and Henry Burr?
These Whitburn books are marvellous and for further details contact:

Record Research Inc.
P.O.Box 200
Menomonee Falls,
WI 53052-0200
USA
(tel. 262-251-5408
fax. 414-251-9452
e-mail: record@execpc.com)

In addition, the Whitburn web site can be found at: www.recordresearch.com

Malcolm Macfarlane

BOOKS 'N' BING

1. Bing Crosby - Day by Day by Malcolm Macfarlane (published by Scarecrow Press, $85, ISBN number 0810841452)

This is a little delicate but I need to advise you all that my book of Bing's life is now available. Containing 830 pages plus 8 pages of photos, this hard cover book certainly looks good.

The content will have to be assessed by others, perhaps in the next issue of BING magazine, but from my own point of view, I can confidently say that it is the most detailed record of Bing's life ever on a day to day basis. The original diary which we published in 1997 has been dramatically expanded with many new entries and I have included a huge number of reviews of Bing's performances plus extracts from relevant books. A simple discography, a bibliography, an updated version of Jim Reilly's Bing Crosby Information File and a large index, which picks up many other show biz icons, supplements what I hope will be an indispensable reference book, not only for those interested in Bing but anyone researching other stars of the period. The price amazes me but, as you will appreciate, it is out of my hands.

USA and Canadian members can obtain the book direct from Scarecrow Press and if you order via the Internet you get a 15% discount. Contact details for Scarecrow (which is part of the Rowman and Littlefield Publishing Group) are:

email: custserv@rowman.com
phone (USA): 1-800-462-6420
phone (Int'l): (717) 794-3802
web site: www.scarecrowpress.com
Mail: Scarecrow Press, Inc.
15200 NBN Way, P.O. Box 191
Blue Ridge Summit, PA 17214
Tax information: CA, CO, Il, MD, NY, PA and TX sales tax apply. The book can also be obtained through Borders or from Amazon.

In the UK and Europe orders should be placed with :

Shelwing Ltd.
127 Sandgate Rd.,
Folkestone,
Kent CT20 2BL, UK
Phone: 0044-1303-850-501 (01303-850-501 if dialling from UK)
Fax: 0044-1303-850-162.

The price is £76.50 (including post and packing). You can also order it through most good book shops. Amazon (UK) are offering the book at £76.50 plus UK postage and I can order it over the Internet for anyone who wants it in a similar way to the Gary Giddins book.

In Australia and New Zealand, the book costs A$187.30 which includes 10% GST. it can be ordered from:

DA Information Services
648 Whitehorse Rd.
Mitcham, Victoria 3132, Australia
Phone: 61-3-9210-7777
Fax: 61-3-9210-7788

My apologies for the "plug".

2. Seabiscuit: the making of a Legend by Laura Hillenbrand (Fourth Estate, £16.99 - also published by Random House in the USA)

Harry Kirkman of Sutton, Surrey sent me a copy of an article in *The Observer Sport Monthly* magazine for August which contained extracts from this new book. Seabiscuit was a famous racehorse owned by Charles Howard, father of Bing's close friend Lindsay Howard. The extract which is most relevant to us concerns Bing's horse Ligaroti :

> Lin was sitting at a restaurant table with his father and Bing Crosby, whose misadventures as a horse owner were becoming an embarrassment. An idea was kicking around in Lin's head: why not have a match race between Seabiscuit and Ligaroti? Charles Howard snorted.
>
> Crosby lit up, he had invested $600,000 in building a new track, Del Mar, a magnificent seaside racing palace near San Diego. But Del Mar needed a boost; daily attendance averaged just six thousand. A match race featuring Seabiscuit was just what the track needed. Crosby and Lin worked on Howard for the rest of the meal.
>
> Howard began to see the merits of the race. For one, there was a purse of $25,000. In addition, Smith [Tom Smith, the trainer] might enjoy pitting his horse against one trained by his son, Jimmy, just as Howard would enjoy facing off against Lin. And Lin wouldn't let up on the needling. Howard gave in.
>
> Lin and Crosby (who was then 35) worked hard at putting on a horse race Hollywood-style. Crosby arranged to have a large section of the clubhouse roped off and patrolled by guards, with admission restricted to Ligaroti rooters - the 'I'm for Ligaroti' section. He contacted 400 friends, mostly movie people, and talked them into coming to cheer his horse on. He had 400 pennants printed up in Ligaroti's colours, cerise and white polka dots, and attached to canes for waving.
>
> On the sweltering race day, special trains and buses poured in from San Diego and Los Angeles, filling the track with well over 20,000 people, many more than the official capacity. Scores of Crosby's friends, including Clark Gable and Carole Lombard, Spencer Tracy and Ray Milland, took up their pennants. 'Is there anyone left in Hollywood?' wondered a spectator.
>
> Crosby perched on the roof with Oscar Otis, who would call the race for a national radio broadcast. . . . Seabiscuit flew under the wire first. Lugging 130 pounds, . . . Seabiscuit had broken the track record by four seconds, the equivalent of 25 lengths.

Box office appeal: Bing Crosby at the track with Pat O'Brien and Spencer Tracy

The race took place on August 12, 1938 and Dixie Lee presented the $25,000 prize. *In Call Me Lucky,* Bing gave his version of the proceedings:

> The crowd began to yell the moment the horses broke and they never stopped yelling all the way around. . . They turned for home head and head, and they finished that way with both jockeys batting at each other with their whips and grabbing at each other's saddle cloths. At the wire the picture showed Seabiscuit a winner by a whisker. Although there has always been a dispute as to whether that picture was read properly.
>
> Be that as it may, they broke every track record en route. They broke the record for the half mile, the three-quarter mile, the mile, and the mile and an eighth. . . . There was an awful stew about the jockeys' deportment and track manners. The judges claimed that our jockey was at fault. They ruled him off for thirty days and gave him a fine, which we paid. But they didn't know that I

had a movie of the race made and I ran it off for Mr. Howard. In the film it was clear that Richardson was no more to blame than Georgie Wolfe. Nothing will be gained by post morteming about which Jock hit the other horse across the nose with his whip, thus starting the fracas. But once it started, they both grabbed clothing and saddle blankets, and from the sixteenth pole home, it was a melee, a pier sixer on horseback.

We lost the race and lost the money. But to see two fine horses put on performances like that was worth the money. It is certainly one of my most treasured performances of Del Mar.

Clearly, it was quite a race!

3. Bob Hope: The Road Well-Travelled by Lawrence J. Quirk (Applause £18.99).
I saw this book in Florida earlier this year and had a quick glance through it. It seemed a rather unpleasant and inaccurate work and this seems to be confirmed by a review in the London Daily Mail of August 19 following the book's publication in the UK. The reviewer, Simon Brett, states:

> None of this meant Bob Hope was a nice man, and, in *The Road Well-Travelled,* Lawrence J. Quirk makes no attempt to whitewash him. Hope was mean, vindictive and a serial adulterer. He was ruthless in dumping people who'd passed their use-by date and in fighting rivals who threatened to steal his limelight.
>
> His long partnership with Bing Crosby was fraught with tension. He was merciless in teasing Crosby about his hairpiece (he had a noticeable bald spot), on and off screen referring to him as 'Skinhead'. Crosby also had rather a flabby rear, for which Hope dreamed up the term 'Mattress Hip'.

See what I mean? Neither the author nor the reviewer appears to have any real idea about the nature and success of the Hope-Crosby relationship. It was the insults that made it funny! As for Bing having "a noticeable bald spot", Bing would have been delighted by the understatement.

So, don't buy this nasty and inaccurate book and tell your friends not to do so as well.

Bing Crosby Meets ....

This is the tentative title for an hour long feature on Bing to be broadcast by BBC Radio 4 on December 29 at 8.00pm (GMT) as part of the Archive Hour series. Both Ken Barnes and your Editor are involved and the BBC certainly seem to be doing their homework thoroughly. The programme will look at Bing's radio career in depth and there should be something like 40 minutes of music with the remainder being interviews. For our readers outside the UK, the programme can be picked up on the Internet from www.bbc.co.uk/radio4.

Talking of radio shows which can be heard over the net, Jane Fitzgerald posted the following on the Bing Crosby Internet Museum discussion board in November.

> Just wanted to share with all of you that Cincinnati's WMKV-FM has recently started airing a retrospective on Bing and Friends twice a week, 5 p.m. Monday and Wednesday (that's Eastern Standard Time). I caught it by lucky accident the other day when I was in the car. You can listen in on their website: wmkv-fm.org. This is my radio station of choice, and now I'm even more happy with them! May I add here my personal wishes for a peaceful and joyous Thanksgiving Day to you and your families.

High Society is revived at the Crucible

Cole Porter's *High Society* is being revived by the Crucible in Sheffield, England from December 13 to January 26. Jenna Russell will play Kelly's role of socialite Tracy Lord, with Ian Duncan and Keith Dunphy in the Crosby and Sinatra roles. Directing is Fiona Laird, highly praised for her revival of *Oh! What A Lovely War* for the National Theatre.

Liz Hurley pregnant by Steven Bing - Cartoon seen in the Daily Mirror on November 10

Keith Parkinson's Celluloid Crosby

When the twentieth century ended there were lists produced purporting to select the best of whatever the previous one hundred years had delivered. The entertainment industry didn't escape. In the last issue of BING, the editor provided a run-down of the BBC Singers Poll. Bing was listed fifth. Malcolm refers to it as a marvellous achievement "so long after Bing's death" although Nat Cole - in third position - died twelve years before Bing. I don't know of a Nat Cole lobby so maybe the fact that he arrived on the scene as a vocalist some twenty years after Bing accounts for his greater popularity. Anyway, these columns are not the place to measure one talent against another. Polls can be a barometer of current public taste and we have to accept them as we find them. There were two BBC polls which involved broadcasters, critics and the listening public in tabulating the singers and the songs which made the greatest impact between 1900 and 2000. An earlier poll related to popular songs and that didn't necessarily link composition with performer.

In the U.S.A. the American Film Institute published a list of the top one hundred American movies of the previous century. This proved to be controversial if only because the moviegoers themselves weren't able to vote. Instead, the critics and academics compiled one hundred titles which they felt represented the best. Few film fans agreed. The list was top heavy with art-house product rather than the type of escapist fare that Hollywood does best.

The ticket buyers of the twentieth century wanted their say. That was eventually made possible by the publisher of two American film magazines: *Films of the Golden Age* and *Classic Images*. The votes the AFI poll denied those that bought tickets at the box office were cast by about ten percent of the readers of those magazines. Their votes were collected over a period of about eighteen months and it was decided to tabulate the top five hundred films. Had the list stopped at number 100, no Bing picture would have been represented. Both magazines carry articles which appeal to the older filmgoers, with the 1930s, 40s and 50s being prominent in the coverage given to the films and actors featured. So the expectation was a populist view from people who went to the cinema regularly during the golden age of the movies. The list held few surprises. "Gone With the Wind" came out top followed by "Casablanca" and "The Wizard of Oz". Those three were first exhibited during the period 1939-1942. The first musical proper was "Singin' in the Rain", placed fourth. "Top Hat", "Swing Time", "42nd Street" and "Sun Valley Serenade" were the highest placed black and white musicals. The first silent picture on the list was "Sunrise" which came in at number 28. All the aforementioned titles came ahead of any Crosby picture. The first art-house type film was the Italian film "Bicycle Thieves" which ranked 130.

What did the voters think of Crosby films? Four were listed. The most popular film was "Going My Way" in 120th position. "Holiday Inn" was not far short of 300th position. "High Society" came in about sixty or so further down the list whilst "White Christmas" was at the tail end. If you link reader age profile to the votes cast, then the 1940s triumphed over the 1950s in terms of Bing's popularity. That is in line with Crosby's box-office appeal during those two decades. I expected to find a "Road" film listed but no doubt the seven "Road" pictures which could win Crosby votes collectively received too few votes individually for any one "Road" film to receive a ranking. I remember a poll conducted in Ralph Harding's "Crosby Collector" magazine some thirty years ago which placed "Blue Skies" in favourite film slot, possibly because of the sheer number of Irving Berlin songs featured by Bing. Its absence from the "Classic Images" / "Films of the Golden Age" list proves nothing other than that polls are bound to disappoint unless they reflect your own tastes and preferences.

Another poll of interest was earned out by *The Radio Times*. This was truly a people's choice poll. Readers voted for television comedy favourites over the last fifty years. In the Best American Sitcom category "The Phil Silvers Show" cornered 22.1% of the votes and came in second. ("MASH" took first place with 40.7%) When it comes to American television my preference for situation comedy hasn't budged much since my teenage years. My enjoyment of "The Phil Silvers Show" has not diminished since I first saw the early episodes nearly fifty years ago. Since that time the schemings of Sergeant Bilko have been regularly slotted in to BBC schedules either on Saturday mornings or around midnight during the week. I've written before about the episode entitled "Sergeant Bilko Presents Bing

Crosby". It aired in the U.S.A in 1957 with a BBC broadcast following the year after. The plot is simple. Bilko, out to make money, advertises a personal appearance by Bing at Fort Baxter. Bing appears in the last few minutes of the show when he recites "The Wreck of the Hesperus."

"The Phil Silvers Show" ran from the autumn of 1955 until the summer of 1959. There was a total of 142 twenty-five minute shows. When the show first went into production, CBS used three cameras to film the action simultaneously. It was shot in sequence and then edited. That film show was then screened for a live audience - usually servicemen - and their reaction was added to the soundtrack. That is why the laughter sounds spontaneous rather than canned. When an attempt was made to bring Bilko to the big screen in the 1990s, Steve Martin played the sergeant, proving once and for all that we should accept no substitute: Phil Silvers was Sergeant Bilko.

Bing's guesting on Silvers' show stemmed from the two appearing on the Ed Sullivan show on November 11, 1956. Crosby and Silvers were old friends. Silvers had been a warm-up man on Bing's Kraft Music Hall broadcasts and the two had maintained contact on a showbusiness level. Bilko's creator and chief writer was Nat Hiken. Hiken was at the Sullivan show rehearsal and knowing that Silvers and Crosby were friends he mentioned that he had a script which could be adapted to suit a Crosby guest shot. Bing showed instant interest and wanted to know where and when. That was on a Sunday. Two days later the shooting of the Crosby segment of "The Phil Silvers Show" went ahead with the rest of the script being finalised to lead up to Bing's appearance. Hiken worked backwards and eventually fashioned the story leading up to the Crosby finale. It was the 52nd show in the series and has had frequents showings on British television. Such was the success of "The Phil Silvers Show" that the BBC issued audio cassettes of some of the soundtracks and CBS/Fox Video released a Bilko collection which included the episode "Sergeant Bilko Presents Bing Crosby."

On the other hand, "Bilko and the Crosbys" has never received a U.K. screening. It was first shown in the U.S.A. on 12th November, 1958 and was the 115th Bilko. The Crosby involvement is Gary, Phillip, Lindsay and Dennis. Lindsay is assigned to Camp Fremont motor pool. (The switch from Fort Baxter to Camp Fremont occurred at the start of the 1958 season.) Lindsay tells his three brothers that life is good under Bilko. Bilko is angling to become Bing's manager hence his treatment of Lindsay. Phil Silvers fantasises he is Bing and uses the four Crosby

Bilko and Bing

boys to run concessions at Bing's annual golf tournament. Back to reality, the three Brothers visit Lindsay at Camp Fremont and tell him of plans to produce a record album called "The Five Crosbys". Then a message is received that Bing has other commitments and can't make the recording session. Bilko improvises an arrangement and substitutes for Bing in a performance with the four brothers. The word comes that Bing can make the recording session after all. Bilko is disappointed but the show ends with him being invited to spend a weekend with the Crosbys.

Bing does not appear in the episode, which was written by Neil Simon and Terry Ryan. Simon went on to become an outstanding comedy writer, whilst shortly before I wrote this piece I learned of Terry Ryan's death. Both writers were responsible for several episodes of "The Phil Silvers Show" and were capable of concocting situations and dialogue which are timeless. I fully expect to be watching and laughing at Bilko well into the 21st century.

Keith Parkinson

THE A-Z OF BING'S MOVIES

McINTIRE, JOHN (1907-1991) Actor. His sole contribution to Crosbyana was as Inspector Fallen in *Top o' the Morning* (1949). In that film, due to a misunderstanding he is responsible for demoting the Barry Fitzgerald character. That in turn leads to Fitzgerald's distrust of Joe Mulqueen (Bing Crosby). McIntire spent most of the 1950s as a character actor or dependable second lead. Fame came overnight. When Ward Bond died in 1960, a vacancy occurred for a wagonmaster on television's "Wagon Train" and the job went to McIntire. He divided his time thereafter between television series and quality Hollywood movies. One of his last "acting" assignments was providing a voice for the cartoon feature "The Rescuers".

MacKENNA, KENNETH (1899-1962) Stage actor turned director turned script editor turned screen character actor. At the end of a varied showbusiness career MacKenna appeared as President Tribble in *High Time* (1960). In the film he wisely refuses to accept the resignation of Helene Gauthier (Nicole Maurey) when he is told that she spent her summer vacation with one of her pupils (Bing). None of the films he directed in the 1930s are remembered today but he made a memorable appearance as Judge Kenneth Norris in *Judgement at Nuremberg* immediately following his Crosby film.

McLEOD, NORMAN Z(ENOS) (1898-1964) Director. McLeod had a light touch. He helmed *Pennies From Heaven* (1936), and *Road to Rio* (1948). He also directed *Alias Jesse James* (1959) in which Bing made a cameo appearance. Comedy was his forte. His first movie job at the age of 21 was gag writer. He'd worked with the Marx Brothers on two of their funniest early films so he was well prepared to tolerate the antics of Bing and Bob when he took them to Rio. Actors like W. C. Fields and Danny Kaye made their best films with him. Choice examples of his comedy work from three decades prove his contribution to Hollywood's funnier moneyspinners: *Topper* (1937), *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty* (1947) and *My Favourite Spy* (1951). He retired after making *Alias Jesse James*.

McMAHON, HORACE (1906-1971) Actor. A gentle, old-fashioned name for a character actor initially typecast as a gangster or jailbird. He was the former in his one Crosby film - *Birth of the Blues* (1941) - when he played Wolf, one of Blackie's gangster henchmen. He's his usual menacing self during the cafe sequence where Crosby, Teagarden and Martin sing "The Waiter and the Porter and the Upstairs Maid" following which McMahon helps to start a riot. After his success on Broadway in "Detective Story", in which he played a police lieutenant, he was offered more respectable parts including a cop in the long running television series "Naked City". His last film confirmed his crooked days were behind him when he appeared on the right side of the law in the Frank Sinatra film *The Detective* (1968).

MacMURRAY, FRED (1908-1991) Singer / saxophonist who became an actor. Fred MacMurray had an important role in *Sing You Sinners* (1938) when he played Bing's elder brother. That was their only time spent together on the big screen although both were featured in the all-star Paramount production *Star Spangled Rhythm* in 1942. MacMurray was also considered along with Jack Oakie for what eventually became the first Road film. MacMurray's first attempt as an entertainer followed a few recordings he made for RCA Victor. "All I need is just one girl" was made in March, 1930, and has been re-issued a couple of times since. His showbusiness career proper dates from 1933 when he was spotted by a Paramount talent scout. He was appearing on Broadway with a group known as the California Collegians in the musical "Roberta" and shortly thereafter was making his movie debut in *Friends of Mr. Sweeney*. He was one of a handful of actors who could move from dramatic roles like *Double Indemnity* (1944) to light comedy such as *The Egg and I* (1947). His screen career was longer than Bing's. This was due to a revival in the 1960s sparked by Disney using him in family comedies such as *The Absent Minded Professor* (1961) and *The Happiest Millionaire* (1967). During that same decade he appeared in a successful situation comedy on American television called "My Three Sons". His final film was *The Swarm* in 1978. He was diagnosed as suffering from throat cancer and for the last years of his life he stayed out of the limelight, enjoying retirement in the company of June Haver, the actress he married in 1954.

MAGIC WINDOW, THE Song. Written by Johnny Burke and James Van Heusen for Bing to sing in *Little Boy Lost* (1953), that non-musical film with songs. It's the final song in the movie and Bing sings it to Jean - the boy in the title, played by Christian Fourcade - when the two are boating on a visit to the zoo.

MAIDEN BY THE BROOK, THE Song. Written by Leo Robin and Ralph Rainger for the Crosby picture *Paris Honeymoon* (1939). The song was one of two compositions from the composers which were not used. The other was 'Work While You May". The film ran for 92 minutes and Bing had not starred in a film with a longer running time up until then so the decision to limit the vocals to five might have been made for the purpose of keeping the film's length down.

MAIDEN OF GUADALUPE, THE Song. Ten or so years later it was common for films to have running times exceeding a hundred minutes. *Just for You* (1952) came in at 104 minutes and contained nine vocals. This was one of three Leo Robin - Harry Warren songs from the film which Jane Wyman soloed. She recorded it for Decca where it enjoyed the distinction of being coupled with Crosby's "Zing a Little Zong" for single release. Can you remember how it goes?

MAJOR PICTURES Crosby's deal with Paramount Pictures allowed him to make a limited number of films outside that studio. Two films for Major Pictures were made in 1936 and 1937: *Pennies From Heaven* (1936) and *Doctor Rhythm* (1938). Emanuel Cohen was behind the organisation of Major Pictures. He'd been part of the revamped Paramount Pictures Inc. when it emerged from bankruptcy in 1935. Previously he'd been with Paramount Newsreel and now was studio head of the new Paramount. Bing's two films with Major Pictures gave him investment opportunities and eventual substantial profits. The studio facilities of Paramount were used for both films but *Pennies From Heaven* was released through Columbia with *Doctor Rhythm* being distributed by Paramount.

MALNECK, MATTY (1904-1981)
Composer/orchestra leader. A familiar name to purchasers of Bing's Decca records, Malneck had one association with Bing's Hollywood. In *East Side of Heaven* he is seen early on in the film and later leads the "radio" orchestra used towards the end of the movie. He was with Paul Whiteman as a violinist when Bing was a Rhythm Boy and remained as an arranger with that orchestra until 1937. His orchestra supported Bing on eleven recordings and his violin playing was usually prominently featured. His composing career often found him collaborating with Johnny Mercer and he played a part in Bing's early solo career as co-writer of "I'm Through With Love" which Bing recorded in 1931. His main film assignment came in 1959 when he supervised and conducted the band sequences in the comedy *Some Like it Hot*.

Matty Malneck accompanies Bing on his violin and is supported by the Music Maids in a scene from East Side of Heaven

MAN AND HIS DREAM, A Song. It was the main romantic ballad written by Burke and Monaco for the 1939 film *The Star Maker*. We hear it quite early on in the film when Bing buys a piano and sings "A Man and His Dream" to his girl, played by Louise Campbell.

MAN ON FIRE Film. Made in the early months of 1957 this serious drama did not make the same impact as Bing's earlier non-musical roles. It was his first totally non-singing part although the Crosby vocal of the title song is heard over the opening credits. A combined plot and critique can be found in Leonard Maltin's "Movie and Video Guide": "Divorced father (Crosby) refuses to grant his remarried ex-wife partial custody of their son in this modest domestic drama." There was speculation at the time the film was in production about Bing forming a relationship with leading lady Inger Stevens. Although Bing personally approved of her casting, the fact that they had a few dates together meant little in the long term. Financially the film disappointed at the box-office. This affected Bing personally because he had a 25% stake in the movie. It was the second of a two picture deal made under the same terms with M-G-M. The success of the first more than made up for the poor performance of *Man on Fire* - it was *High Society*. Of course box-office takings don't equate to a film's quality. The most balanced summary I have found on *Man on Fire* comes from David Shipman's book about Hollywood's golden years. He writes. "It was generally disregarded by the press and lit no fires at the box-office, which was a pity, for Crosby's naturalistic work here was comparable to that of Spencer Tracy."

MAN ON FIRE Song. Written by Paul Francis Webster and Sammy Fain - a pair who specialised in writing title songs for 1950s Hollywood movies - the original intention was for the Ames Brothers to sing the title song. The film was to be 100% dramatic Bing and it seemed inappropriate for Bing the crooner to break the spell. However, when producer Sol C. Siegel heard Bing's Capitol recording of the song he decided that Bing should sing over the opening titles and the Ames Brothers should reprise their RCA recording over the closing credits.

MAN WHO FELL TO EARTH, THE
Film. This 1976 British Lion production was a vehicle for the then popular David Bowie. I found the plot slightly baffling but Bing's contribution towards the end of the film made me sit to attention. Bowie's girlfriend in the film, played by Candy Clark visits him wearing a Father Christmas outfit. As the two move around Bowie's apartment a forty second segment of Bing's Capitol recording of "True Love" is featured on the soundtrack.

MANCINI, HENRY (1924-1994) Composer, songwriter and arranger. Mancini scored *High Time* (1960). He was at the beginning of his cinematic peak, his next but one film being *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, released the following year. Mancini's star was rising just as Bing was turning his back on

Hollywood. He gave many a film a lift with his strong melodies although it can be argued that Crosby's movies had no need of a musical boost. Mancini's rise was gradual. He had played piano and arranged for the Glenn Miller Orchestra. That made him a natural choice as musical arranger for the bio-pic *The Glenn Miller Story* (1954). His work on the television series "Peter Gunn" led to composing assignments for the big screen, the best remembered of which were for the "Pink Panther" series which provided work on and off for twenty years. But by the mid-sixties he had made his mark as a stand alone orchestrator/arranger and a series of record albums for RCA sold well on initial release and as re-issues.

BC in BC

Or more fully, "Bing Crosby in British Columbia." The suspicious ones amongst you may suspect that this is something to do with the Editor's holiday in Canada and you could be right!

As we all know, Bing was born in Washington State which is adjacent to British Columbia and he probably had a natural affinity to the Canadians in view of the proximity. It is possible that he visited Canada as a youth to take part in sporting activities but the first visit to British Columbia that we can be definite about was in 1930 when he was part of the Paul Whiteman organisation. Let the diary entry in my new book *Bing Crosby - Day by Day* tell the story.

1930

April 4, Friday. Whiteman and his entourage have been billed to appear in Vancouver in British Columbia at 8:15 p.m. at the Vancouver Theater followed by a supper dance at the Hotel Vancouver. The band is also booked to perform at the Grand Public Dance at the Auditorium the following day. As he arrives in Vancouver, Whiteman is amazed to find that the Canadian immigration authorities refuse to allow his orchestra to perform at the two dance dates although they can perform at an "entertainment", i.e. the theater. Whiteman says "all or nothing" and pulls out of all his Vancouver engagements. The orchestra personnel spends most of the weekend in Vancouver.

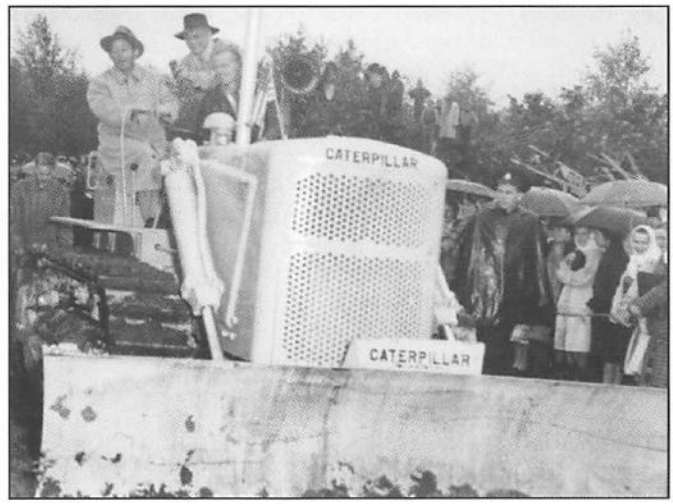
April 6, Sunday. The Whiteman band leaves Vancouver for Seattle.

So this rather strange event would have given Bing a little time to sample the lovely city of Vancouver but it was to be many years before he returned. As far as I can see, it was 1948 before Bing went back to Vancouver although as you will read later he had been to Canada on several occasions in the meantime. In 1948, Bing had been persuaded by boxer Jimmy McLarnin to put on a show in Vancouver to raise funds for the planned Sunset Memorial Community Center. He took his Philco show on tour to Vancouver, Spokane and San Francisco, and this is what happened in Vancouver.

1948

September 20, Monday. Bing and his troupe arrive at the Great Northern Railway Station in Vancouver, Canada, at 10:30 p.m. Despite the late hour, the acting mayor and other civic officials are there to greet them supported by a kilted police pipe band. An unruly crowd of 2,300 people causes chaos by mobbing Bing and damaging the civic cars being used. Bing and his party check in at the Hotel Vancouver.

September 21, Tuesday. Bing's plan to play golf at Capilano Golf Course at 8:00 a.m. is canceled due to heavy rain. During the morning, John Scott Trotter rehearses the local musicians who have been recruited for the next day's show. Later at 1:30 p.m., Acting Mayor George Miller presents Bing with a golden key to the city on the steps of City Hall. Bing sings along as the Firemen's Band plays "Where the Blue of the Night." He goes on to the site of the proposed Sunset Memorial Recreation Center at 51st and Prince Edward Avenue, where he speaks to the crowd of 1,000 and sings a chorus of "Blue Skies" as a joke about the weather. Bing then climbs on to a bulldozer in pouring rain and turns over the first few yards of soil to inaugurate work on the center.



Later he goes to the *Vancouver Sun* newspaper offices where he spends time "editing" the sports pages.

September 22, Wednesday. After a morning rehearsal where, as is usual, the musical numbers are recorded for possible use in the final version of the show, Bing, William Gargan, Marilyn Maxwell, and Ray Milland tape a Philco show at the Forum to produce funds for the Sunset Memorial Center. In due course, it is revealed that $21,000 has been raised. The show is broadcast on October 13. Marilyn Maxwell is paid a total of $1,500 for this show and a subsequent show in Spokane.

> Harry Lillis Crosby, the cold eyed little crooner from Spokane whose smiles are as rare as the million bucks he makes each year, jammed the Exhibition Forum for two hours Wednesday night. Supported by a talented cast, including local musicians, he sent the capacity audience home obviously happy after half a dozen songs, and a line of gags which ran the gamut from pat to patter. Stan Thomas, president of the Sunset Memorial Community Center, estimates that 8,000 people attended the performance and that $33,000 was grossed.
>
> In gratitude, the hall in the center will be called "Bing Crosby Auditorium" center officials announced as the show ended. Other tokens Crosby collected for his donated services included a life membership in the Squamish Indian tribe as "Chief Thunder Voice," a Cowichan Indian sweater, emblazoned with the title, and a verse-laden wooden tomahawk.
>
> The man who invented crooning some eighteen years ago celebrated his chieftainship by wrapping himself in a blanket and joining Squamish Chief Matthias Joe and his braves in a war dance. This gag, like several others, drew hearty laughter, even from the 1,500 paying customers in the north end of the Forum who got a fine view of the back of the orchestra, but hardly a glimpse of what was happening on stage. . . . Once Crosby noticed the plight of the 1,500 viewless in the north end. The crowd out front shouted "We can't hear you." From the back came a louder roar: "We can't see you." Crosby promised he would "work around" to the viewless. Thirty minutes of the show was recorded for release on U.S. networks October 13 after unsatisfactory sections have been substituted.
>
> (Ralph Daly, *The Vancouver Sun*, Thursday, September 23, 1948)

September 23, Thursday. Bing has a practice round at Capilano Golf Club, Vancouver.

September 24, Friday. Golfs with former Canadian

champion Ken Black, Gordon Bowers, and Bill Mackenzie at Capilano Golf Club.

September 25, Saturday. (8:30 a.m.) The train carrying Bing and his entourage pulls out of the Vancouver station.

So, a very successful visit for Bing and incredibly I have recently received a cassette of the local radio coverage of several of the events described. The cassette was kindly supplied by ICC member Alan Matheson of Vancouver. Alan is a prominent musician and some years ago he put together a Paul Whiteman project for CBC. Using the original Whiteman scores, he conducted the CBC Vancouver Jazz Orchestra in a concert of Whiteman favourites, some of which originally featured Bing, and also played cornet on several songs. Alan kindly let me have a tape of the show and very good it was too. Please see the "One Sweet Letter From You" section for more information about these Whiteman sessions.

The Sunset Memorial Community Centre was officially opened by Bing on September 29, 1950 at 8:30 p.m. via a long-distance telephone call from San Francisco which was broadcast over the loudspeakers to an overflow audience. Bing sought an early opportunity to visit the Centre the following May and inadvertently created some fuss in the press when he was turned away by the prestigious Hotel Vancouver.

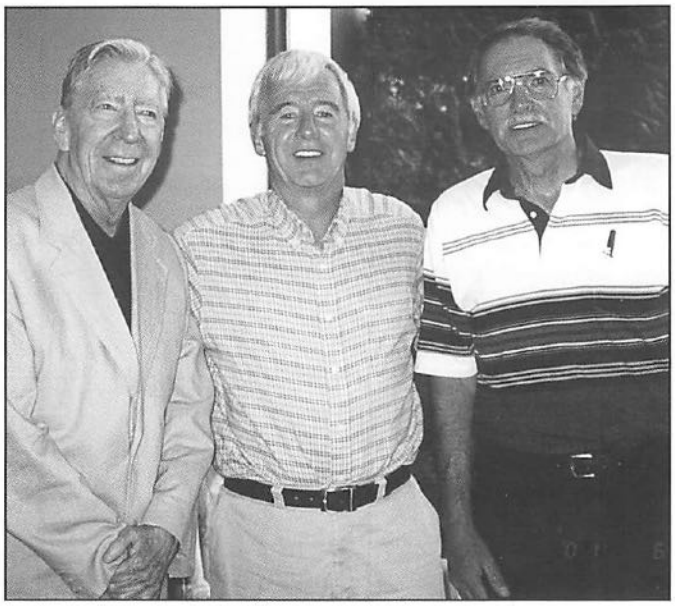
1951

May 28, Monday. Bing and Bill Morrow have been on a fishing trip which has taken them to Jackson Lake, Wyoming, and Flathead Lake, Montana amongst other locations. They drive from Idaho to Vancouver, Canada, and as Bing is unshaven and wearing a leather jacket with dungarees and boots, he is initially turned away by the hotel night room clerk at the Hotel Vancouver at 7:00 p.m. Fortunately the bellhop notices this and stops Bing from driving away. The bellhop takes Bing and Bill Morrow up the freight elevator to the seventh floor and allocates them two rooms. Bob Hope later hires the hotel night room clerk for a bit part in his film *Son of Paleface.*

May 29, Tuesday. (4:00 p.m.) Bing goes to the Sunset Memorial Community Center in Vancouver where he sings an unaccompanied chorus and verse of "Blue Skies" to an audience of 1,000 teenagers. The mayor had apparently sent a car for him but Bing makes his own way to the center which causes some confusion to the civic party.

Bing was to return to Vancouver on many occasions after that for fishing trips and clearly he loved the city and the surrounding countryside. My wife Pat and I visited Vancouver in June and July and we were most impressed too with everything we saw. Naturally I visited the local library and I found this to be an incredible building which has been modelled on the Coliseum in Rome. It was used extensively for location shots in the recent Arnold Schwarzenegger film *The Sixth Day* when it appears to finish up being blown to pieces. Fortunately, it had been put together again when I visited and the facilities are excellent. The library maintained several clippings files for Bing and I was very quickly able to check out Bing's activities over the years in the city. The library also had photographs of Bing on file and details of these have been passed to our Photographs Editor Ron Bosley.

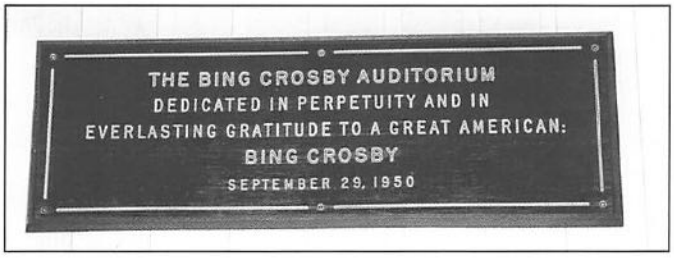
Being a member of the ICC is almost like belonging to the Rotarian movement because almost everywhere I go I can meet ICC members. In Vancouver, I met Sheldon O'Connell (Canadian broadcaster and author of *Bing - A Voice for all Seasons* and also the singer on the karaoke tape *You Sing Bing Crosby*) and the meeting was arranged by Bing enthusiast Ben Weaver who lives at Nanaimo on Vancouver Island.



(l to r) Sheldon O'Connell, Malcolm Macfarlane and Ben Weaver

Ben and his wife Sue came over to Vancouver for the day and took Sheldon and my wife and I to lunch. Sheldon and Ben were briefly video taped sending a message to our Leeds gathering in October. Sheldon has a very nice voice and he gave us a brief snatch of "Swinging on a Star" for the entertainment of those attending the Leeds meeting.

After lunch, Ben took us to the Sunset Memorial Community Center at 404 East 51st Avenue where the friendly staff showed us around. It was nice to see that the commemorative plaque is still there.


THE BING CROSBY AUDITORIUM
DEDICATED IN PERPETUITY AND IN
EVERLASTING GRATITUDE TO A GREAT AMERICAN:
BING CROSBY
SEPTEMBER 29, 1950

Also, there were two very large photos of Bing, the first from 1948 showing him on the bulldozer moving the first few yards of soil and the second from 1951 when he visited the Center. It was very pleasing to note that the Center is still prospering and Bing would have been delighted if he was still with us.

Ben has since been back to the Center and let me quote from his e-mail to me:

> "I did travel to Vancouver again on July 1st. to attend the Canada Day Celebrations at the Sunset Community Center. A well attended, day long program of ethnic dances and singing was held on an outdoor stage built adjacent to the Community Center buildings. The MC who was introducing the various acts asked me to come up and sing one of Bing's songs.
>
> They gave me a sheet with the words to "Galway Bay" on it which I proceeded to sing, without accompaniment, into a mike in my best "Bing" style. I was introduced as a member of the International Crosby Circle, headquartered in England. I don't know how many new fans of Crosby were made, but it was all in good fun and I believe I heard some applause a way in the back row!
>
> The small gymnasium was set up with many photos of Bing during the sod breaking and also at the Official opening of the center. I managed to take some photos of the displays, which I will send on to you. The people at the Centre mentioned that they plan on having a more formal celebration of the 50th. Anniversary of the Centre sometime in September. They will send me notice of this once their plans are formalized."

Poor old Ben, having to sing "Galway Bay" - the things we have to do to get new members! Incidentally, as Wig has mentioned, Ben had a full page of coverage of himself and his Bing collection in the Nanaimo Daily News of December 16, 2000. He hopes to repeat this in 2003 to tie in with Bing's centenary.

From Vancouver, Pat and I travelled inland and crossed from British Columbia to Alberta where our first stop was Jasper. Few of you will need reminding that Bing filmed the location shots for *Emperor Waltz* there in 1946. He liked the place so much that he came back in September, 1947 and played in the Jasper Park Lodge Totem Pole Golf Tournament. We described how he won the tournament on that occasion in BING #121 (Spring 1999, page 16). Bing played in the Tournament again in 1949 and again reached the final only to be beaten by his friend George Coleman. Bing always stayed at Jasper Park Lodge when he visited the area but unfortunately Pat and I could not afford this. However, we could just afford to go and have a coffee on the terrace there which we duly did. Ron Field (from Australia) used to work at the Lodge and he had told me that there was a large photo of Bing in the General Manager's office so nothing daunted, we asked the staff about this. The General Manger, Kevin Toth, very kindly invited us into his office and we had a nice chat whilst admiring the large photo of Bing with a bear.

Mr. Toth directed me to the cabin which Bing always used and also we were able to go into the trophy room at the golf course and see the Totem Pole trophy which Bing won in 1947. His name is nicely engraved on it but you cannot see it in the photo unfortunately.

Our travels took us via Lake Louise and Banff to Calgary. We met Michael, Judy and Shawn Crampton in Banff. We knew they were going to be there at the same time but to bump into them in a car park (not literally!) was amazing. The Stampede was taking place in Calgary and this too had some Bing connections as Bing attended the Stampede in 1959 and 1960 but I'll have to give you the details some other time.

So, as is becoming customary, our holiday threw up lots of Crosby contacts. Bing did, of course, visit other parts of Canada and perhaps I'll be able to see these too on a future occasion. I know that Gord Atkinson in Ottawa will be cross if I don't! The things I do for the ICC!

Malcolm Macfarlane

One Sweet Letter From You

Members' views, opinions and comments are always welcomed and we have great pleasure in reproducing some of the letters received since the last issue

Keith Parkinson, St. Helens, UK.

Thanks for BING 128. Let's hope that the budget runs to 60 pages for subsequent issues. The importance of the American scene both major and minor came to me when reading the current issue. *A Pocketful of Dreams* is the finest biography on Bing to have originated from North America - or anywhere else for that matter. And the brief reference by Tom Bertino to the Stanford Theatre showed how Bing's name is kept alive theatrically over there.

I can confirm all that was written about the Stanford by Tom and Charlie Baillie. I went there with a group of cinema enthusiasts from the UK three years ago. We visited on a Saturday evening when the place was more or less full. The programming policy is usually mainstream American family movies and *My Fair Lady* was showing. The owner walked on stage with a mike before the feature was screened and told the rest of the audience that a group of Brits had invaded the auditorium. The owner also owned a nearby nightclub and arranged for us to visit after the show. He even provided us with drinks. It was almost the real thing if RKO "B" movies are the real thing. The lights were low. There was a husky voiced female vocalist supported by a pianist. The only thing that was missing was cigarette smoke. California's no smoking policy removed that essential element of film noir.

Pete Cakanic, North Augusta, SC, USA

It was great to learn that *Billboard,* the publication that monitors the music industry has an editor who is aware of its back pages. I'm referring to the great article reprinted on page 15 of our summer issue.

However in 1994 when *Billboard* issued a 276 page 100th Anniversary issue, there was not one photo of Bing. Not even a tiny postage stamp size picture of Bing in a montage. Not one reprint of a sheet music cover (Bing was on at least 200) Yet there are three almost half page photos of a still skinny Sinatra. And photos of Dean Martin, Al Jolson, Gene Autry, Hank Williams, Elvis. Even Buffalo Bill Cody. But no Bing. And in printed text Bing's name crops up only twice, but only as part of a list. His name does not stand-alone. One needed a magnifier to find even these two mentions.

Could this have been oversight? Doubtful. That would be like walking around downtown Chicago and not seeing the Sears Tower, the world's tallest building. Was it intentional to dismiss Bing Crosby as an almost nothing? One has to come to that conclusion.

Consider that "Pop Memories, 1890-1954" put together by Joel Whitburn was compiled using mostly *Billboard* statistics. And in the first half of the last century Bing was so far ahead of second place Paul Whiteman that it can't even be called a race. Having access to this information (as Bradley Bambarger points out) why did *Billboard* choose to so ignore Bing in its anniversary issue? I wrote to the then managing editor to ask why. I was diplomatic, told him that I enjoyed the issue but wondered why Bing was boycotted. I did not receive a reply. Recently, I mailed a letter to Timothy White, Editor in Chief, to thank him for the great article in the April *Billboard* concerning Bing. My letter also inquired why Bing was virtually erased as one of the most important entertainers of the 20th Century. He was also editor in 1994. I'm awaiting a reply.
(Editor: Undoubtedly we owe Billboard's rediscovery of Bing to Gary Giddins' book and all credit to them for running a nice article. Pity they did not give him the credit he deserved in the centenary issue but I'll bet Timothy White will remember who Bing was from now on. Well done Pete for writing to Billboard.)

Ted Laker, Southsea, Hants, UK

As I now seem to be a bona fide member, having had a letter published, plus a cartoon I'd almost forgotten about, placed in the current magazine, I thought you might like to peruse a few more, perhaps they may even see the light of day in the Christmas edition of BING, if you've got an odd corner or two to fill. Any way the magazine is certainly a very interesting read as usual, streets away from the old days of Bill Taylor, Frank Murphy and Uncle Tom Cobbley and all, when it was dodgy duplications, and battered old typewriters, plus special skins, that had to be attacked with a kind of cutting stencil pencil, to produce the covers. Who

would have dreamt of the standards achieved today.

As to Bing's placing in the *Singers of the Century* poll, I think his position could have been better, if the BBC in their wisdom hadn't kept on plugging singers that they thought should be at the top. I even wrote to our local paper about the unfair prompting and they published it, plus a small picture of Bing. That Crosby reached such a high position without prompting is quite an achievement.

Our marvellous Angel Radio is back on air, and what a great job Jim Reilly does for Bing, plus all the Crosby requests flooding in, it's like being in heaven some days, and you've got to pinch yourself to find out whether you are dreaming!

(Editor: It's nice to receive Ted's compliments but we must all be grateful for the magnificent efforts of the early magazine originators, such as Ted, who laid such a sound base for us. Regarding Ted's cartoons, Stan White copied the earlier one to me and it was my intention to use it to fill a corner in a magazine and to properly acknowledge it. Due to a misunderstanding between me and the printer last time, a whole page of 'fillers' appeared as the inside back cover instead of a letter from Bing to Gord Atkinson which I had mentioned in my editorial! Anyway, it is with great pleasure that I have reproduced another of Ted's cartoons in Bert Bishop's article and more will follow in due course).

John Bignell, Wembley, Middlesex, UK.

Very many thanks for the Summer 2001 BING #128, full of fascinating info and the high standard of production continues to be maintained. A real credit to all of the officers of our Society.

I thought one of the best items was reserved for page 58. Fancy a young girl (Gillian Kelly, age 21) being able to write so perceptively about no less than five Bing recordings. A revelation indeed. I hope we hear more from her. After all there will come a time when we will need her generation to "carry the torch" well into the 21st. century.

I was also intrigued to read the result of the BBC Singers Poll. You may be surprised to hear that Pat Forster (from Midhurst) forecast that Sinatra would win. She reasoned that he was 15 years younger than Bing and his fans were likely to be around in greater numbers these days. Our consolation is that at least a real singer did get the No. 1 spot. With such a diverse collection of people who were able to vote, I suppose for Bing to reach No. 5 was not too disappointing.

(Editor: The subject of Frank Sinatra also crops up in a most thoughtful letter from Ken Crossland about the Centenary Campaign)

Ken Crossland, 9 Arden Drive, Dorridge, Solihull, B93 8LP, UK

If we are to persuade organisations to mark the centenary of Bing's birth, we need to have a very clear proposition that demonstrates:

- why the event is significant
- why that particular body should seek to be associated with it.

Why is the event significant?

It may be obvious to us, but we must recognise that it will not be obvious to others. A review of our "product" suggests some reasons:

- Bing built an image as an all-round, wholesome, family entertainer. In so doing, he downplayed his early significance as a singer. This worked incredibly well whilst Bing was alive, but in down playing the "specialism", Bing's memory was always likely to fall away after his passing. The wholesome, family image has also been undermined by the Gary Crosby book and the two suicides. The image is seen by many to have been hypocritical.
- We have the recordings to demonstrate Bing's vocal significance, but 80% of them are of a sound quality that does not meet modern minimum standards. The 20% that does is not representative of Bing at his vocal peak.
- The casual easy listener is still caught up in the "Sinatra was King" view of the world. This is a view fostered by the fact that most of today's media influencers do not go back beyond 1950 and even those who have had the chance to understand Bing's impact (e.g. Parkinson) have chosen to forget.

So in my view, we have a problem and we will not solve it by saying "yes, but....." to these things. If we are to solve it, we have to turn one or more of these things to our advantage. I think that thing is Sinatra. Recently, the work of the likes of Giddins and Friedwald has started to bring recognition of Bing's role in defining and shaping the concept of the popular vocalist. "Walk On By" brought that out very strongly, and it was picked up by a number of reviewers. So, my thinking is that something around the "Who Begot Sinatra" line might be the angle.

Why should an organisation wish to be associated with the centenary?

There are a number of possible reasons, the most obvious of which is commercial gain. Those most

likely to gain from it would seem to be the Crosby family, the record companies and those who own the rights to film and TV material. There may be others who would profit less directly - e.g. a newspaper if it thought that a week's feature on Bing 100 would stimulate additional sales. I would suggest that these organisations are sufficiently commercially astute that if they thought that latching onto the centenary would bring bigger bucks, they would not need much persuading - including the Crosby family.

If it's not a money-spinner, then there needs to be another reason. That might be fear of being left out. So, if the BBC concluded that this was an event that others were marking in a big way, this would increase the pressure on them to do something. But that suggests we should view the BBC as a bandwagon-jumper rather than a flag-bearer.

So who are the flag-bearers? My inclination, if we are to go down the line suggested above, would be to look more at the specialist and the arts based media outlets. That might take us to "Jazz FM" perhaps, maybe the National Film Theatre, maybe "Downbeat" - these sorts of organisations. This suggests a lower profile campaign - at least at the start, but more focused. If Bing made a "mistake" in becoming too generalist, let's not repeat it.

(Editor: Some very good ideas from Ken and I would very much appreciate members' comments. The campaign is deliberately "generalist" at present in order to draw in as many volunteers as possible. Once we have members offers of help we can make the campaign more focused so do please let us know what you can do to help.)

Stan White, Kettering, Northamptonshire, UK

I purchased Bing's *News Chronicle* competition record from Walt Keach's second hand warehouse in Havelock Street in Kettering about 1946. At last the full story of this special Brunswick Label is made known, well done Lionel. (Brunswick 1456 "Young and Healthy").

The Dodge Advert on the back cover has a nice photo of Bing at the top, but I doubt if the cardboard cut-out standing beside the car is Bing! More likely the man who did stand in for him often on publicity shots.

The front cover photo of Bing in his cowboy kit is very pleasing with Bing looking quite at ease. It is well known that he was often not at all at ease with publicity photo shoots, and much preferred the casual shots which Larry used to take of him, when he was out golfing or fishing or whatever. Larry took some good ones too.

It might be a good idea to try to amalgamate all of the organisations devoted to Bing, but not before all of the reasons for and against have been fully aired by all interested. It is extremely important that the membership of all of the clubs make their views known before any action is taken, because to start to protest after the action has been taken, causes all sorts of complications, friction and outright hostility, as has happened in the British Isles in the more distant past.

Membership is on the increase at the moment, but "the Grim Reaper" so often referred to by the late Reg Bristo, is bound to cause a drastic reduction in membership in due course. Nevertheless I must insist on behalf of us "Brits", that our excellent BING magazine is kept going in all of its colourful and glossy glory. The ICC should at the moment start to publish press release stories, which members with contacts can circulate. I suppose in this case ICC means Malcolm, he does do this sort of thing quite well, so why not! The possible amalgamation as above, would make a good story, with a mention of Bing's One Thousand Million Record sales, as broadcast by Desmond Carrington and gleaned from George O'Reilly.

(Editor: The back cover of the last edition certainly seems to have stirred up some comments, particularly on the Bing Crosby Internet Museum bulletin board. The consensus view seems to be that the whole photo was originally black and white so it was colorised and Bing's face was pasted on to the picture of the man beside the car!

Stan's suggestion of press releases has prompted us to formally re-appoint him as UK Publicity Officer for the ICC! He has always fulfilled this type of role in any case and it is a pleasure to recognise his activities appropriately.

I mentioned in my B.C. in B.C. article about Alan Matheson and his Whiteman sessions. Alan has written giving more details.)

Alan Matheson, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

One bit of information that I forgot to send in my recent letter is about the "Whiteman" shows that I sent you. The music, for the most part, came from the Paul Whiteman collection in Williams College, Williamstown, Mass. Ten years ago, I did a Whiteman tribute show at the college I work at with a mixture of pros and student musicians. A friend of mine in the US told be that Bill Challis who had arranged many of the 1927-29 Crosby/Bix classics was still alive and so I eventually contacted him and met him (twice in 1991, 1993). He led me to look

for other arrangements that had been never recorded commercially (as did Vancouver collector, Dave Dixon).

In 1996, after conducting the first CBC Radio tribute to Whiteman, I took a trip to Williams College to seek out more rarities. As you will have heard from the tape I sent, there were first-class arrangements of great tunes ("Ain't Misbehavin'", "Love Me or Leave Me" etc.) that Columbia records chose to pass on but were performed on radio (of course, Lionel's wonderful book lists many more). I believe that some of the arrangements we played were given their first "airing" in quite some time and certainly their Canadian debuts.

I was certainly grateful to meet Bill Challis as he was one of my earliest musical heroes. In fact, all of my musical interests and professional career have been influenced by Bing and those around him. The first music I remember is Bing's voice and as a two year old, I played his "33 Gang Songs" LP over and over. I graduated to mid-'30's Decca's a few years later when I began piano studies (at six) but it was the sound of Bix's cornet on two Whiteman re-issues that led me to jazz, arranging (Challis' work here), and performing. In fact, it was really Bing that made the penny drop (at age nine) for me vis a vis jazz improvisation when I realized how many of his "second" choruses on those above mentioned Decca's (i.e. "An Apple For the Teacher") were improvisations and how closely these second choruses resembled the Bix, Louis and King Oliver solos I listened to. Finally, the parts we used for the broadcasts I sent you we photocopied directly from the original parts for Bix, Trumbauer, Jimmy and Tommy Dorsey etc...

Glad that you enjoyed them and if there is any other information you need, please ask. I'm glad and proud to be a member of the ICC and appreciate all the hard and meticulous work that goes into the magazine! I'm surprised that the Gary Giddins book isn't readily available in the UK! As far as some reviewers that say that the book is too "scholarly", I can't imagine what they are comparing it too. As a musician and teacher, I can tell you that Giddins' approach was excellent and combined a very well researched narrative with some excellent musical / stylistic insights. In any case I hope "Pocketful" creates lots of interest in Bing and most importantly Bing's music.

(Editor: Great to hear from Alan and to read how Bing got to him at age 9! What talented members we have and it is nice to think that Paul Whiteman's superb work is being perpetuated.)

John Stiles, Pinner, Middlesex, UK

My wife Betty recently selected for me from Pinner library a book called "Letters Home, 1926-1945" consisting of letters from Brian Johnston (the late broadcaster) to his mother, starting with his days at Eton, Oxford, working in the family coffee-importing business pre-war, then onto his war-time progress in the Guards Armoured Division up to the end of the war in 1945. Most interesting as each page is annotated to explain names, shows and films which are referred to in the majority of letters.

This leads to Bing, in a small way:-

Saturday 23rd. January, 1943 Warminster
"Hope you liked 'Holiday Inn'."

Wednesday, 26th. April, 1943 Thetford
"Went over to Cambridge on Saturday, saw 'Holiday Inn' for the third time."

Thursday, 7th. September, 1944 (in Europe - invasion)
"There seem to be some wonderful films on in London and Bing there too."

Friday, 13th. October, 1944
"Bing Crosby in 'Going My Way', a lovely film."

The book has now been returned to the library but for those interested it is published by Orion and has been edited by Brian's son, Barry. From memory, however, although a number of some shows and some films are referred to, the only other personality who I recall being mentioned was Fred Astaire. Brian was apparently therefore quite enthusiastic about Bing Crosby. In fact, I have just recalled that he interviewed Bing and Bob on "In Town Tonight" (possibly in 1950). I should love to hear a recording of that interview - the cross-talk as incredibly fast and furious.

I did not become aware of Bing until 1947, the year I started work and it was a fascinating learning curve going back into the past for the greatest years. The Cameo cinema in Victoria (where I first worked) was helpful to the cause as we saw "Rhythm on the River" and "The Starmaker". Victoria Public Library was helpful; I was able to borrow "The Incredible Crosby" by Barry Ulanov and another book by Ted Crosby which was less memorable. The next step was to slowly (because of the cost!) start to build a record collection.

There was enough encouragement in those days, late 1940s, on the radio, Family Favourites, Bing Sings, and Radio Luxembourg had two Bing record programmes introduced by Peter Dyneley. In the forces at the camp cinema, I went to see "Road to Morocco" and the enthusiasm of the audience would rival a Cup Final crowd of today. The laughter was deafening. So, it was a Bing Crosby world during the

period when Brian Johnston was writing home (and later, of course).
(Editor: I think that the "In Town Tonight" interview was in 1952, the day before the famous golf match at Maidenhead involving Ted Ray and Donald Peers, and it may have been Peter Duncan who did the questioning. However confirmation would be appreciated. I'll bet someone has a tape of it!

Brian Johnston was a very popular British radio personality who is perhaps best known for his cricket commentaries. The thoughts he expressed in his letters were so typical of the average man in the street in those days. In some ways, we are lucky today because so many of Bing's films are available to us on video and CDs enable us to build a collection very quickly. The Bing pleasures were more rationed in those days but of course, as John says, it was a Bing Crosby world then.)

Norman Wolfe, Florida, USA

I am enclosing Howard Levine's choices for the all time best Crosby recordings. Knowing Howard a bit now you will understand they are in order of preference.

1. Moonstruck
2. I've Got To Pass Your House
3. My Kinda' Love
4. Black Moonlight
5. The Day You Came Along
6. After Sundown
7. Temptation
8. Our Big Love Scene
9. The Last Roundup
10. (If he gave me a tenth I have lost it or perhaps just blocked it out as I have done with "Mandy is Two", "More I Cannot Wish You" and others.)

One of Howard's choices reminds me of an incident a number of years ago. I was leaving my office in mid-town Atlanta and spotted a teenage girl waiting for a bus. I recognized her as the daughter of a couple of friends of mine and I gave her a lift. I had a Crosby tape playing and she seemed to be interested until she suddenly sat bolt upright and exclaimed in an incredulous tone: "Madly I await you EVEN THOUGH I HATE YOU??" They don't write 'em like that anymore.

Greg Van Beek, West Bend, WI 53095, USA

I received a response from Valentin Barrios at La Moraleja today. The letter was mailed on the 3rd of September. No doubt delayed by the terrorist activities. I had sent him a copy of BINGANG back in July, along with a $50 donation to their Bing Crosby Fund.

Attached is his letter. He seemed pleased, except for one huge, glaring error on Francisco's part; Cesar Zulueta is still very much alive!! That means all three of the foursome which included Bing are still alive.

Thought you'd like to see this, and possibly print a little something in the next BING magazine to correct the error.
(Editor: Yes indeed, Greg. Valentin's letter was very nice to read and included:
"Although the article is a fantastic and passionate information of the tragic death of Bing Crosby here in Madrid, I have to point out one inaccuracy regarding Mr. Cesar Zulueta. In the text, you point out that Mr. Silvela informed Mr. Prieto of the death of Mr. Zulueta "several years ago". That is happily not true. Mr. Zulueta, who served as club president for 22 years, is still alive and playing daily rounds of golf. Probably the error was induced by the recent death of Mr. Zulueta's successor, Mr. Ridrejo, only three months before Mr. Prieto visited us at Golf La Moraleja."

We are happy to put the record straight and hope that Mr. Zulueta has many more rounds of golf! Finally, I saw the following on the excellent Bing Crosby Internet Museum, Discussion Board and thought that it should be shared with you all as it was such a nice story)

Jeff Peters, as seen on the Bing Crosby Internet Museum, Discussion Board.

I am new to this board, but I have always been a fan of Bing Crosby. My late mother was in a San Francisco restaurant in the mid 1970s, when she passed out due to heart problems. It just so happened that Bing and his wife were also there. Bing never met my Mom before, but he sent her flowers and a prayer card. He also offered to pay for her hospital stay, but my Mom had excellent health care. Bing must have been a wonderful man.

LIONEL'S LINES

"HI DIDDLE-DEE-DEE..."

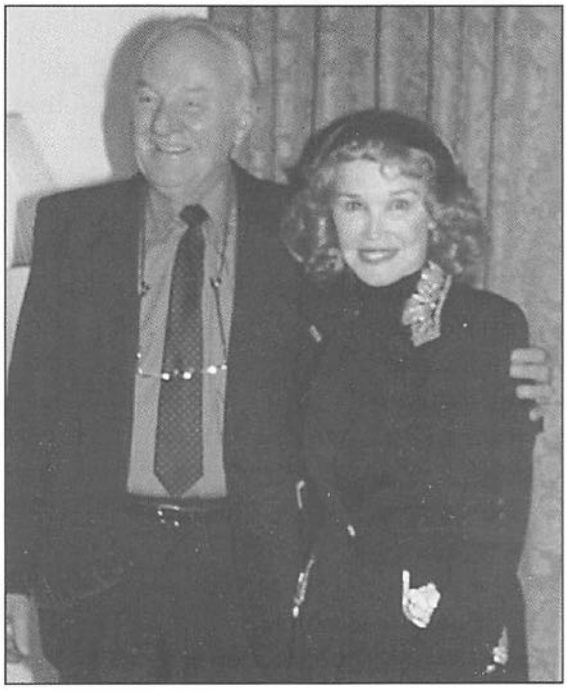
Well, we finally hit the big time - Hollywood! A little too late to star with Shirley Temple in 'Susannah Of The Mounties' as had been my original intention although, to be perfectly frank, my experience in surviving wagon train massacres would have been rather limited, at that time.

Sad to say, there was no screen test waiting. I did rest a grubby trainer on the cement at Grauman's (I cannot bring myself to call it Mann's) Chinese Theatre and had the obligatory colour photograph taken (Why do modern cameras always depict me as slightly balding?) but I was depressed. The plaques in the sidewalks reflected scores of names that were unknown to me. I was haunted by the shades of Regis Toomey, Arleen Whelan, Kent Smith, Mary Beth Hughes and Paul Guilfoyle bewailing conspicuous oversights. Don't tell me you've never heard of them. There were giants in those days.

I have, on occasions, hinted in these columns, of my own 'showbiz' background and at a recent gathering of the faithful at Leeds, someone was reckless enough to suggest that the theme demanded expansion. Alas, you have been nursing a practised impostor to your respective bosoms. It is true that I 'trod the boards' for more than twenty years but my every portrayal was a fraudulent pastiche of characters stolen from many hours spent ogling my idols of the silver screen.

An early characterisation for a Drama Festival was a ninety year-old, frock-coated, Canadian, necessitating blacking-out most of my teeth and adopting a bald wig (nowadays these devices might be considered superfluous). There was just one 'Land O' Goshen' in the script but I supplemented this with a couple more and a sprinkling of 'dadnabits' in a curious hybrid of Walter Brennan and George 'Gabby' Hayes. The Adjudicator was kind enough to comment, 'Quite theatrical but generally, unconvincing'.

With an Amateur group, the roles rolled on - Policemen - 'Excuse me sir, is that your car outside'; Doctors - 'Nothing seriously wrong, Mrs. Brandywine, he'll be up and about in a few days'; Butlers - 'Will you be requiring anything more before I retire, m'lud?' The pattern was broken when a walk-on part as a bumbling European baron, drew spontaneous applause but it was only Nigel Bruce, playing Dr. Watson with a thick Teutonic accent.



Lionel with Kathryn Crosby in November 1999 (taken with a modern camera!)

The 'one-acter' as a chain-smoking, Moroccan drug-peddler sporting a fez and pebble glasses sprang from an improbable clone of Peter Lorre - 'Udderly widout scruple, carmpletely immoral but fess-scinating'. Elwood P. Dowd in 'Harvey' owed more than a little to the Jimmy Stewart original with overtones of Stan Laurel.

I remember the small glow of pride when complimented for my American accent, in spite of being upstaged by a young actress who constantly insisted on pronouncing Wichita as 'Witch-Eater'.

Then, a brief interlude with the androgynous inhabitants of Repertory - 'Dw-arling, did you see my 'Danny' in 'Night Must Fall'? Personally, I had grave doubts about seeing his 'Danny' in the cold light of day. And they all seemed to have names that were even more peculiar than my own. I can remember playing opposite a sloe-eyed temptress called, 'Celestine Puddifoot' and there was a 'Leopold Sirombo' - whatever happened to him? They'd all had parts in 'Z-Cars' or 'Emergency Ward 10' and the enduring memory from this period is the summing up of one of my performances, by a critic in a London newspaper who wrote, quite simply, 'Mister P's tie was an artistic solecism of the worst kind'.

A young family, the urgent requirement for a regular income and a fear of under-achieving ended my stairway to the stars but should you happen

across a British movie entitled 'Tread Softly' circa 1952, watch out for an exterior long shot of a callow youth seated at a small table with the star, a then, middle-aged Frances Day. It might be me! But now, for something completely Christmas.

There will be few among you who do not have, nestling in their collection, a copy of 'A Christmas Sing With Bing'. The sleeve notes reveal the following, 'When Bing Crosby raised his voice to lead CBS Radio's 1955 Christmas Show, he had no idea that he was initiating an event, eagerly anticipated, by millions'. In fact, there were eight more of these 'Christmas Chirps' as Bing was wont to christen them and in this premiere show, aided by whimsical comments from the ubiquitous Ken Carpenter, he carries the sole burden of introducing the tape-links, of singers and choirs from around the World, interspersed with carol and song from his own repertoire.

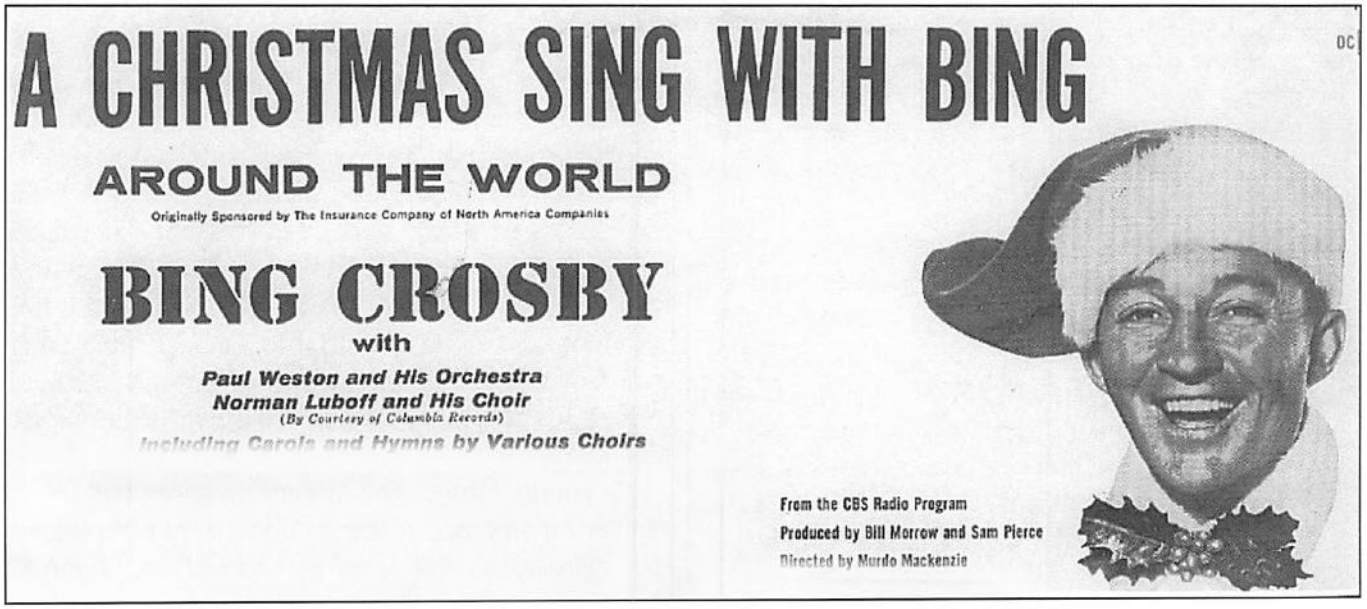
The discographers have been obliged to allocate a recording date of 24th December to these Crosby tracks but this must be considered unlikely. In those days, announcers still felt bound to identify broadcasts which had been pre-recorded and although the opening and closing credits have been edited from the original album, a piece in 'Variety' of 28th December describes it as an 'all-transcribed show'. The same journal goes on to say,

> "Insurance Company of America laid out some $30,000 for this Christmas Eve 'Sing With Bing Hour' and that might be figured as cheap considering the promotion values. CBS toted up the statistics, claiming over 70,000 letters poured in for a 'What Christmas Means To Me Contest' for moppets with nothing but on the air advertising and no premiums or prizes save to a single winner. What happens to the other 69,999 kids who made with their letters is something else, perhaps they won't be snared into ever writing again or will compare the prize letter with one of their own and be disturbed about it. The winner was seven year-old Delores Short who had spent her whole life in Pine Ridge, Kentucky Children's Home. She read her letter. The Groaner promised her a bicycle, gifts for the other kids in the home and there was quite a bit of hoop-la regarding a B29 crew out of a USAAF base in Alaska dropping the letter over the North Pole for Santa's mail bag. If there was an important Christmas carol left out by either Der Bingle or the pick-up points, it didn't come to mind. Crosby breezed along in his well-known way with talk and chirp, some of it carried on with Ken Carpenter who gave a gentle ride to the insurance commercials. Fitting background emanated from the Paul Weston Orchestra and the Norman Luboff Choir."

Those of us who might relish some satisfaction from uncovering 'different takes' in the series are liable to be disappointed. The first six shows appear to have relied, almost entirely, on permutations from a master tape of around a dozen traditional carols plus 'White Christmas'. In retrospect the device is glaringly obvious but after an interval of 52 weeks, the average listener would not have been aware of the 'deception' or indeed, worried too much! 'Jingle Bells' and 'Joy To The World were regularly aired along with the certainty of 'White Christmas' and that traditional 'closer' for all of Crosby's radio shows at Christmas, which he called 'the best-known of all Christmas songs' - 'Silent Night'.

The second 'Sing', in 1956, called upon the services of Maurice Chevalier in Paris and Sarah Churchill in London, extending their compliments of the Season to Hollywood. Bing adds 'Adeste Fideles' to five of the carols he used last year and later, we are permitted to 'tiptoe' into the nursery of Miguel and Maria Ferrer, to hear their mother, Rosemary Clooney, singing 'Away In A Manger', by way of a lullaby.

Christmas of 1957 found Bing repeating six of


A CHRISTMAS SING WITH BING
AROUND THE WORLD
Originally Sponsored by The Insurance Company of North America Companies
BING CROSBY
with
Paul Weston and His Orchestra
Norman Luboff and His Choir
(By Courtesy of Columbia Records)
Including Carols and Hymns by Various Choirs
From the CBS Radio Program
Produced by Bill Morrow and Sam Pierce
Directed by Murdo Mackenzie

the songs heard in the first two programmes, supplemented by his own versions of 'Away In A Manger' and 'God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen' and as a secular alternative to the normally spiritual theme, his commercial version of 'Rudolph The Red-Nosed Reindeer' was inserted into the proceedings. In the same programme, Gary Crosby (still in army uniform, at that time) exchanged greetings with his father from Salzburg whilst introducing an Austrian choir singing 'Stille Nacht'.

Of the seven carols/songs used in the fourth of the 'Christmas Sing' series, in 1958, six had been heard at least twice, previously. The sole variation was provided by the first appearance of Kathryn Crosby who duetted with her husband on 'Away In A Manger', dedicated to 'Tex', aka the four month-old Harry Lillis III who 'is listening at home to the radio, right now'!

The writer knows precious little about the Christmas Eve 'Sing' of 1959, apart from the fact that the usual participants, i.e. Paul Weston's Orchestra and the Norman Luboff Choir were in attendance and that a new song was featured. 'It's Christmas' was repeated in the show of the following year but strangely enough, although recorded by others, it doesn't appear to have been used by Bing in any other context.

'Variety' of the 28th December 1960 welcomes a change from the usual 'Around The World' theme:

> "This was the sixth 'Christmas Sing With Bing' and the Yuletide Eve special is well on its way to becoming an institution which is all for the best since Crosby has that special sense of hominess and belonging that adds an extra kind of warmth to a season when the Christmas song-fests tend to lose their individuality. The 'Sing with Bing' remains something special, to look forward to each year. A change to format was offered this year, Crosby dropping the international flavour of season's past for a stay at home session with Rosemary Clooney, his regular CBS radio partner, her hubby Jose Ferrer and his own wife Kathryn as they swing, happily, through a wide category of Christmas songs from the newer pop standards right down to old-fashioned carols. The music was fine. Crosby and Miss Clooney were in top form and Miss Grant displayed a small but pretty voice. Ferrer added a reading of 'Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus' - the 1897 'New York Sun' editorial that was effective and overall the show had a fine sense of restrained gaiety. Two negatives however. One, was the fact that there was far too much talk and not enough music - at least in the first half of the show and Bill Morrow's rapid-fire dialogue tended to be a over cute. Second - Far too many commercials for Insurance Company of North America and pretty hard sell at that. 'Sing With Bing' being almost an institution it seems about time the commercial aspect of it be accorded appropriately similar treatment."

Mrs. Crosby might have well felt peeved when 'Variety' described her in the cast list as 'Cathy Grant' and although no one would be likely to disagree with 'too many commercials', the producers had every right to take exception to the phrase 'not enough music'. The critic must, surely, have had a heart of stone because, without including the monologue performed by Jose Ferrer and Kathryn or the regular sign-off of 'Silent Night', there were twelve songs, nine of which involved Bing. Naturally, a few of the previously recorded carols were featured plus a repeat of the 'Away In A Manger' duet from 1958 but there was also a rare medley of some of his Christmas pop hits with Rosemary Clooney consisting of, 'Santa Claus Is Coming To Town', 'Rudolph' and 'Here Comes Santa Claus' and a rendition of 'The Twelve Days Of Christmas' by the entire cast.

Kathryn Crosby, Edgar Bergen and Jo Stafford (subbing for flu victim Rosemary Clooney) comprised the guest list for the seventh of these programmes, in 1961. Bing's version of 'Joy To The World', from the inaugural show and 'Jingle Bells', first heard on the second programme, had now become predictable 'regulars'. But Miss Clooney's indisposition may have been instrumental in favouring us with the bonus of another unusual duet with Jo Stafford of a medley similar to that used for the previous year but with 'Silver Bells' replacing 'Rudolph'. However, the red-nosed caribou did get in on the act when Mr. & Mrs. Crosby performed their own interpretation of his anthem. A clip edited from a 1955 edition of radio's Edgar Bergen/Charlie McCarthy Show provided some unnecessary 'padding' and will now be of academic interest only, featuring nine year-old, Candice Bergen who eventually rose above the tag of 'Charlie McCarthy's sister'.

Not surprisingly, the show of the following year reflects the content of his first solo LP of Christmas songs when Bing and/or guests, Kathryn, Rosemary Clooney and Johnny Mercer deal with eight of the fourteen titles on the recently completed album. Our genial host kicks off with the title song, 'I Wish You A Merry Christmas' and you will not be too surprised to hear an announcement during the closing credits which states, 'Some selections were from previously recorded master tapes'. The show is a good one. Rosemary handles 'The Littlest Angel' and 'Let It Snow' with aplomb and joins Mister Mercer for 'Santa Claus Is Coming To Town'. The songwriter fashions his own seasonal and typically inventive lyrics for 'The Glow Worm' -'...Light up the sky from Pole to Isthmus - Spell out His blessing "Merry Christmas" and finally, our old Yuletide campaigner

joins them both for 'Winter Wonderland'.

You may remember that at the beginning of this piece, I mentioned that there were nine of these Christmas 'concerts'. In this, I have yielded to popular belief that a final show was aired on December 24th 1963 but would appreciate some more concrete information, as a scrutiny of US newspapers for that date, affords no confirmation of the event.

All that remains is to wish you all a Merry Christmas.

Lionel Pairpoint

Leeds 2001

How quickly the months roll around and suddenly it was our annual meeting at Leeds again on October 7! The early arrivals found a number of stalls set up to sell Bing items, including one run by Keith Parkinson who was endeavouring to help the widow of Harry Cheetham dispose of his collection. The 2002 calendar was also on sale and about fifty were sold by the ladies team of Judy Crampton, Joyce Pairpoint and Pat Macfarlane.

Just after 3 p.m., Michael Crampton played the opening bars of "Where the Blue of the Night" and then welcomed 67 guests to the 36th. Annual Meeting of the ICC at Leeds. As is his custom, Michael asked us to stand for a moment's silence as we remembered those members who have passed away since last year and on this occasion he asked us also to remember the tragic events of September 11.

Michael passed on greetings from Wig Wiggins in the USA, Etty Gits from Europe and from David Currington in Australia. Apologies were received from Jim Reilly, Gwen Harvey and from Ron and Vera Bosley, all of whom were handicapped by health problems of one kind or another. Alan Fisher, who had entertained us so magnificently the previous year, had been advertised as attending but unfortunately he had to cry off, also due to health reasons.

A nice presentation pack containing various items including an invitation, a name badge and the menu had been prepared for each guest by Shawn Crampton and the audience showed their appreciation with a round of applause. Our hard working Secretary / Treasurer then passed on his sincere thanks to the rest of the management team saying that we undoubtedly had "the best magazine of its type in the world." Michael said that we were constantly looking for new blood to come into the team so that succession plans could be made.

Michael then handed over to me and I had the great pleasure of introducing Mozelle Seger to the meeting. Mozelle had worked for Bing for 27 years as personal accountant and she had come over to the UK with her friend, Joanne Reeves. The two ladies had stopped off in Dublin for a few days to see George O'Reilly and George had accompanied them to Leeds. Mozelle came forward and delivered a talk about her life which she has kindly made available to us and which we gratefully reproduce on a following page. She had put together a folder containing press cuttings about Bing's death and also many memos to and from Bing concerning financial matters. It was apparent that Bing kept a close eye on the money side of things which is so different to many show business personalties. There were notes about changing cars, insurance matters and property running costs, all of which involved Mozelle as she made the related payments. There was also a note dated 1953 from Bing to Mozelle regarding his sons by his marriage to Dixie. In this, Bing states very firmly that they are not to be given any money which exceeds the allowance Bing has laid down. It was clear that many family members used to borrow money from Bing and the folder contained correspondence about such a loan to one of Bing's nieces.

Michael Crampton greets Mozelle Seger.

Joanne Reeves, Mozelle's friend, had also worked for the Crosby organisation for a short period and also she had been a secretary for Paul Newman and his wife Joanne Woodward for several years. Joanne is now a Certified Meeting Professional specialising in Corporate Event Organization. We shall have to see if she can help us with the centenary celebrations!

After delivering her talk, Mozelle took questions from the floor and she was asked if the fairly standard letter Bing used to send to fans was signed by him personally. Mozelle said that such letters would usually be signed by Bing's secretary, Lillian Murphy, unless Bing was in the office in which case he would sign them. In answer to another question, she said that Bing would be constantly whistling and singing when he was in the office. Mozelle was a fan of Bing's before she worked for him and clearly she remains a huge fan to this day. She felt herself very privileged to work for Bing. I gained the impression that the pay was not lucrative but there were other benefits such as being allowed to stay in some of Bing's homes on occasion. On behalf of the club, I presented Mozelle with a box of Maison Belge chocolates and a bouquet as the assembled members showed their appreciation with a very warm burst of applause.

The next item was to auction several copies of the rare record "African Safari" which Bing recorded in 1968 after his trip to Tanzania. The records had kindly been donated by Greg Van Beek and a total of £60 was raised for club funds. Our sincere thanks are due to Greg for his generosity.

Although Jim Reilly was not able to be present, he had prepared a video presentation and to take us up to the evening meal, the songs from *Waikiki Wedding* were shown. During the meal, Bing's songs were being played and it was lovely to hear so many people joining in with them enthusiastically. A problem we sometimes have during the meal is that the room becomes unbearably hot and again this was the case on this occasion but we survived!

I had the great pleasure of sitting with Mozelle during the meal and talking in greater depth with her about her experiences. Her former boss, Basil Grillo is now entering his ninetieth year and Mozelle agrees that he must take great credit for helping Bing to improve his financial situation in the late 1940s. She talked warmly about Larry Crosby in particular. Mozelle remains close to Bing's daughter, Mary Frances, and had in fact seen her the previous week and taken some lovely photographs of her with her young son which she showed us.

After the meal I rose to present a short video I had taken in Canada which included messages from Sheldon O'Connell and Ben Weaver. Unfortunately there was a fault with the tape and those assembled had to forgo the extreme pleasure of seeing my holiday video! This gave us the opportunity to bring in Arnold Pope to present his quiz. As always, he had prepared some high quality extracts from his collection and amongst the questions, we were asked to name the pianist on the record of "Sweet Sue", the film which featured Bing singing "Auf Wiedersehn" and how many years separated Bing singing "Moonlight Bay" on the Kraft Music Hall and his commercial recording of the same song. Some struggled when asked to name the girl singer on "The Whistler's Mother-in-Law" but the eventual winner was Ken Crossland who had first pick of items donated by various members including Alf Bunn.

Michael Crampton then led a discussion about a possible merger with the American Club Crosby and from a show of hands it appeared that there was unanimous support for such a merger from those present.

The centenary of Bing's birth in 2003 was also discussed and progress to date was outlined. The Hofstra event was highlighted and Mozelle Seger rose to tell us that she hopes that the annual Thalians Ball in Los Angeles in October 2003 will be dedicated to Bing. This is a very prestigious event which is always attended by many celebrities and should give Bing lots of publicity.

To complete the evening, the remainder of Jim Reilly's video was shown and members were clearly entranced as they watched Bing sing songs such as "If I Had My Way", "Only Forever", "Rhythm on the River", "Empty Saddles", "Let's Call a Heart a Heart", "Swanee River", "Learn to Croon", "Country Style" and many others. The laughter which accompanied the extract from Bing's appearance with Sergeant Bilko showed that this classic comedy had not lost its appeal. One very rare item we were shown was a Pathe News clip of Bing taking part in the British Amateur Golf Championship in 1950. Michael expressed our thanks to Jim for putting this superb video together.

The witching hour at Leeds is 10:00 p.m. and this was quickly upon us. As Bing sang "this is the end of a perfect day" it was time to say our goodbyes and to leave for home with a fresh transfusion of Crosbyana in our veins. Our thanks go to Michael Crampton and his family for organising the day for us.

Malcolm Macfarlane

Stories of a "Pencil Pusher"

Mozelle Seger speaks to the Leeds meeting

It is a pleasure to be here with you at the annual meeting of the International Crosby Circle here in Leeds. I have read your magazine for years, never thinking that I might join you here. However, after receiving a nice long letter from Alan Fisher and reading about his trip last year, I talked to my traveling friend, Joanne Reeves, and we decided to attend and make a grand holiday by adding London and Dublin to our itinerary.

One of the most frequently asked questions about my career has been "How did a young girl from Oklahoma become associated with one of the world's most famous personalities"? As Mr. Crosby titled his book - - "Call Me Lucky". While I usually give a short, brief answer, I will take this opportunity to tell you the whole story

I was born Mozelle Harrison in Poteau, Oklahoma, We moved to the oil-boom town of Seminole in 1929. I attended Oklahoma A & M (now Oklahoma State University) where I met my husband, Ola Dale Seger. We were married on March 8, 1940. He joined the Army and became a Liaison Pilot with the 11th Armored Division in 1941. In 1942 I followed him to California while he was on maneuvers in the desert near Indio. My parents had already moved to California, and my father was working at Paramount Studios. They lived across the street, so when Ola was shipped out to the European Theatre, I decided to stay in California and apply for a job at Paramount Studios.

My timing was right. An accounting position became available as men were being drafted. I was hired to take care of the General Ledger for outside producers when they were filming at Paramount. The producers were: Bing Crosby Enterprises, Inc., Bob Hope Enterprises, Inc. Hal Wallis Productions. During that time I was working with their business managers and if they were not available to sign checks I took it to the boss for signature.

When my husband returned from the war, I left Paramount in 1947 to start our family. In 1948, Basil Grillo, Mr. Crosby's manager hired me to do the cost accounting for "Top O' The Morning" for Bing Crosby Enterprises. In 1949 we had our second daughter and bought our home in North Hollywood where I still live today. In 1950, Mr. Grillo hired me as the personal accountant for Bing and Dixie Crosby.

My job varied and included paying office and household bills, depositing checks, general ledger accounting, preparation of preliminary statements for income tax returns and various financial statements as needed by Mr. Crosby. Mr. Grillo was my immediate boss, and he oversaw the various Crosby Corporations for which I did the accounting. Some of these corporations were: Bing Crosby Charities, Inc. Bing's Things, Inc.; Project Records, Inc.; Seven League Enterprises, Inc. and initially for Bing Crosby Productions, Inc. when it was first established in 1955. It went on to become a large production company. I helped close-out the original Bing Crosby Enterprises, Inc. in 1957.

For a "pencil pusher" as we were called in those early years. I had a very interesting job as Mr. Crosby was a very interesting man with a variety of investments. When Dixie Crosby died in 1952, John O'Melveny, the executor, asked me to do the accounting for her estate. In order to do that I had to take a night course at Valley College on Trust and Estate Accounting.

One of the most interesting and difficult parts of my job was keeping inventory of the paintings, fine arts, jewelry and everything that they owned. In later years I worked with an appraiser from time to time in their various homes. When they owned the Elko, Nevada ranch I kept track of the cattle born, sold, bought, etc. A trip to the Ranch made it more interesting to do the work.

After Mr. Crosby died on October 14, 1977, Richard Bergen, the executor for the Harry L. Crosby estate hired me to continue with the Estate until it was closed on January 13, 1981, and the various trusts were set up. I continued to work with Mr. Bergen as Trustee of the Mary Frances Crosby Trust. When we closed the Crosby office in Beverly Hills in January 1981, we moved all of her accounting records to my home-office. Mr. Bergen retired in November 1985, and her Trust was transferred to Bank of the West. I continued to work for Mary taking care of her personal accounts, tax returns and business affairs until 1989, when I retired.

As I mentioned my Dad was working at Paramount Studio when I went to California. Before I started to work there, I was able to visit the Lot to see Dad. One day we were walking toward the stage where he was working as a nurseryman, building trees on the sets. We passed Mr. Crosby riding his bike.

Surprisingly he stopped and said "Hi Pops". Dad introduced me. That was the first time I met Bing Crosby. Later Dad told me Bing always called him "Pops".

He also told me they talked from time to time

about fishing and hunting in Oklahoma where Bing had never been and about fishing in California and Washington where Dad hoped to go some day. Dad said that he sure was a nice guy and that all the workers on the Back-Lot liked him. At that time I was just a fan, never dreaming that I might work for him some day. As a fan, while in Stillwater, Oklahoma, with our husbands away at training camps, we gals would spend Saturday afternoons in the backyard, playing Crosby records on a little hand-winding phonograph, drinking ice tea (and sometimes home brew) sharing news from our husbands.

When I first started to work for Mr. Crosby on January 2, 1950, we were in the CROSBY BUILDING at 9028 Sunset Blvd, I shared an office with Dad Crosby until he passed away. (Around the office we always called Bing - Mr. Crosby and Harry L Crosby Sr.-- Dad Crosby). He took care of the Crosby Investment books then and handled all the checks. Everyone liked to have him around. He always had a funny story to tell (I wish I could remember some of them). When Mr. Crosby came into our office to see his Dad, he would speak with me and I would sometime have a photo of my babies to show him. After Dad Crosby passed away and Bing Crosby Productions, Inc. started producing TV shows, we moved to a new building down the street. There, when Mr. Crosby passed by my office door, if he paused a bit, I would say, "Mr. Crosby, I have a picture that I've just got to show you." He was always nice. Years later, he came into my office, put a little picture on my desk and said, "Mozelle, I've got a picture that I've just got to show you!" It was Mary Frances posed like a little doll in the birdbath at the Las Cruces home. Kathryn has used a couple that were taken the same day in her book, "My Life With Bing", but they are not the same pose. When I was at the Hillsborough home working with the appraiser, during the time they were in London, I saw that little tattered print stuck in the corner of one of the framed pictures in Mr. Crosby's dressing room. When I told Mary about that she said she remembered seeing it there.

In the Crosby Building there were offices for Bing, Everett, Larry Crosby and others. One office was the Fan Mail Dept. Mr. Crosby wanted every letter or card answered. Wherever he was, his secretary expressed his mail to him. If he was in town, Leo Lynn took it to him. He would use his Dictaphone and return the tapes to the office to be typed. The requests for photos and other letters were given to the girls in fan mail to be answered. There were five automatic typewriters, the girls typed in the name and address and "Dear Whoever" - punched a button to type the body of the letter - gave it to Mr. Crosby's secretary for signature - then they ran them through the stamp machine and mailed them.

A 1937 photo of Bing dealing with his fan mail.

I mentioned BING CROSBY CHARITIES, Inc., a Corporation which was set-up to receive all the income from "SILENT NIGHT". It was advertised that all royalties received would be paid out to Charities and to send in requests to Mr. Crosby. So we mailed checks. As I remember, the checks were for around $25 to $100. I wrote the checks, Mr. Larry Crosby or Mr. Grillo signed them - the fan mail girls typed a letter to be mailed with each check. The Corporation was short lived. The Internal Revenue Service ruled that Mr. Crosby had to pick up all the "Silent Night" royalties as his income and a certain percentage of the donations were deductible for tax purposes.

In the 1940's and 50's, Mother worked with her cousin, Nona who owned a café (a truck stop) in Beaumont, California (just West of Palm Springs). Before the freeway, Beaumont was on the main highway from the East to Los Angeles. I told Leo Lynn, Mr. Crosby's driver, that Mother made pies there. I was delighted when they returned from a trip to Palm Springs and Mr. Crosby came into my office and told me he had had a piece of his favorite Gooseberry pie and that Mom sent her love. When I talked to Mother she said he had walked around the building to her pie kitchen to see her. She said all the employees and guests wanted to know how she knew such a famous person who would go out of his way like that. The next time they stopped, Mom sent a whole pie home with him.

High on my list of personal memories are my trips to the various Crosby homes. Our daughters were about six and eight years old when we made a vacation trip to Northern California and across the mountains to Elko, Nevada to see the Ranch and to meet the Ranch manager, John Eacret, for the first time.

The Hillsborough Home

Before they moved in to the Hillsborough home which the family still own, they had the main staircase replaced with a 17th century oak staircase from the William Randolph Hearst collection and also antique-paneling was added in the downstairs library and Mr. Crosby's upstairs office. Mr. & Mrs. Crosby had gone to the Hearst warehouse in San Francisco to purchase several items. William Randolph Hearst was an avid collector of antiques, art objects and mansions. His prized estate was his "Castle in San Simeon" in California. He filled it and several houses on the property, with priceless antiques and art. That is where his mistress, Marion Davies, lived. San Simeon became a social Mecca for the Hollywood elite. Now it is open to public tours. I have done that. It is a beautiful place.

Gary Giddins writes about how Mr. Crosby met Hearst in the early years and details of the parties of when he was working with Marion Davies when he was filming "Going Hollywood". When the move into the Hillsborough home was completed, John Scott Trotter, the bandleader, who also specialized in antiques and had his own store, was hired to direct the placement of the furniture and Mozelle was to list what was in each room. What a big job! Several years later, for insurance purposes they hired professional appraisers and I made several trips to work with them.

Another trip

In May 1974 you could read in the L.A. Examiner in James Bacon's column and I quote "If you make a call to the Bing Crosby office in Beverly Hills next Wednesday no one will answer the phone. Kathryn is appearing at the Geary Theatre in San Francisco in the play "Broadway". She plays a gun moll to rave reviews. So she invited all Bing's help to fly to S.F. to see the play and have dinner as her guests. Bing will get the tab but he doesn't know about it because he is fishing in Baja, California." So Fisher picked us up at the airport in the Rolls - Lillian Murphy, Nancy Briggs, Vera Smith and myself. We had lunch at the house with Mary Frances, Harry and Kathryn. We had a tour of their beautiful home and gardens - saw the play - had dinner at "Trader Vics" in S.F. before our flight home. Of course, I had my camera and have a few photos of that very special event.

When they first moved to Hillsborough, Mr. Crosby did not want to drive the Rolls Royce around town and to the golf course, so he bought a two door Ford. When he drove it to Pebble Beach in January they must have given him a bad time since Oldsmobile was one of the tournament sponsors. When I was back in the office on Monday, Mr. Crosby called me and asked me to send him the pink slip (ownership certificate) for the Ford. He told me he was trading it in on the Oldsmobile. I asked him if I could buy the Ford for the trade-in price. He said sure, so Ola and I went to Hillsborough and drove it home.

Mr. Crosby sold his first Desert home, the one that was built on top of a hill above the Thunderbird Country Club in Palm Springs. Dixie had finished decorating it the year she passed away. Mr. Crosby had found some acreage he wanted to buy next to Phil Harris on the top of a hill above Palm Desert. He gave parcels to Jimmy Van Heusen, Pete Petito and Bill Morrow and they all built their homes in 1954-55. He reserved four parcels for his first four boys that were never used. The Palm Desert home was the one he took Kathryn to after their wedding in Las Vegas. Kathryn has a picture of that home in her book "My Life With Bing". It is also the home where President Kennedy vacationed one year.

Mr. Crosby was always nice to my family and me and allowed us to stay in his vacation homes. The Palm Desert was our favorite, since it was only a two-hour drive from our home in the Valley. We drove down many weekends, but always with prior approval from Mr. Crosby. Then, when it was sold they sent me down to meet the movers.

Mary Crosby is now the sole owner of the Las Cruces home. My first trip to Las Cruces, Baja, California, was on Mr. Crosby's yacht "The True Love" with the boat captain, Jack Wendel and his family. He was taking the boat from San Pedro to the Crosby home. His family and I joined him in Tijuana. We stopped overnight at Cabo San Lucas, at the Palmilla Hotel (at the tip of Baja) in which Mr. Crosby owned part interest.

The next day we stopped at La Paz. I had lunch with Tony Ruffo. I worked with Tony (the Ruffo family owned the bank in La Paz) and we paid the Crosby bills through an account there. I spent the night in the hotel at Las Cruces, the next day visited Mr. Crosby's home and the church he and Rod Rodriquez had just built. Then Rod arranged for me to fly to San Diego with a friend and then home. P.S.

Ola would not go with me and P.S.. Bing was on his yacht a week later fishing for marlin.

Ola did go with me and my cousin, Sue and her hubby in 1972, on that trip and a couple of other trips: we stayed at the Crosby home and used their little fishing boat "The Kingfisher".

On the 1972 trip we stopped in Acapulco, stayed at the Tres Vidas Country Club for a week and attended the first Bing Crosby International Pro Am Fiesta - actually the golf tournament (the Pro-Am that Mr. Crosby sponsored) started the day we left, but the Tres Vidas was elegant and the Fiesta was fun and we enjoyed Acapulco.

Kingfisher
PEBBLE BEACH
Here's what a
Kohler Electric Plant
does on Crosby's*
Kingfisher
Provides electricity for:
• high-powered ship-to-plane radiotelephone
• complex electronic alarm system
• electric toilet
• searchlight with half-mile beam
• hot and cold water pressure system
• cooking equipment
• refrigerator-freezer
• auto-pilot
• depth sounder
• ship-to-shore radiotelephone
• direction finder
• compasses
• bilge pump
• and more!
And this 5,000 watt Kohler Electric Plant can power them all, simultaneously, reliably, year after year after year!
*Bing Crosby, that is.
KOHLER OF KOHLER
Kohler Co., Established 1873 • Kohler, Wisconsin
ENAMELED IRON AND VITREOUS CHINA PLUMBING FIXTURES • ALL BRASS FITTINGS • ELECTRIC PLANTS • AIR-COOLED ENGINES • PRECISION CONTROLS

Bing on the "Kingfisher" (taken from an advert for Kohler Electric Plant)

Rising River Ranch is located in Northern California, Shasta County. One time Larry Crosby invited me and Ola to join him and his fishing buddy for a weekend to fish in that clear, cold river. It is a beautiful place - with Mount Shasta visible on a clear day. Much to Ola's delight, he hooked a large brown trout and when it looked like it might get away, he jumped in that cold water and landed it. Larry teased him about that. My next trip was to do the appraisal there, it took about a week but was a nice place to be. After Mr. Crosby passed away it was sold to Clint Eastwood and he still owns it.

In the early years, the Bing Crosby Golf Tournaments were well attended. Mr. Crosby was the sole sponsor and we paid all the bills out of the office and Larry would work up the budget for the year and we would set-up that amount in our Cash Estimate. Of course, it included the prize money, which was only $15,000 in the early years. All proceeds went to charities. As the tournament grew he continued to ante the original $15,000 prize money. Larry worked with all the volunteers, there were no salaries paid for all those many jobs that had to be done. And Larry was always available, always with a smile. He had a room at Del Monte Lodge on the 18th and that is where we all met after the day's golf was over. These were fun parties there and after Larry passed away in 1975, it was Mary Rose Pool's room, and still a gathering place for family and friends. Ola and I went nearly every year from about 1970.

The company that Ola worked for, Chapman Studio Equipment, furnished the camera cranes for the TV cameras. The Golf Tournament is now the AT&T and Kathryn has had a Bing Crosby Tournament in North Carolina at the Bermuda Run Country Cub. It was a different format than the Crosby Pro-Am. They also raised a lot of money for charities. I understand that this was its last year.

Mary Rose Pool, Bing's younger sister, was a dear friend. After Mother Crosby passed away, Mary Rose. always stayed with us when she was in the L.A. area. Mother Crosby and Mary Rose loved to go to the horse races, so without her Mother, I was elected to go with her. When Santa Anita opened she arrived, and as long as I could keep up with my work, they would let me take off to take Mary Rose to the races... for a week or so I just worked part time.

Mary Rose was with us when Mr. Crosby fell on March 3, 1977 at the Ambassador Auditorium in Pasadena. They were taping a special benefit performance to be telecast on March 20 to celebrate Mr. Crosby's fiftieth year in the world of entertainment. Kraft was the sponsor and the L.A. chapter of WAIF-Children's Division sold tickets for their special section and the Buffet and Party after the show for $100. Ola and I had purchased our tickets. We were seated about ten rows back from where Mary Rose and the office staff were seated on the front row.

During the show the elevator-stage that was in the center of the main stage was used for the band and for Mr. Crosby's closing numbers. He was on the front of the stage when the curtain closed behind him. The band was lowered while Mr. Crosby was

receiving a standing ovation.

He was to exit down a couple of steps into the auditorium and out the side door. Instead he moved the curtain over a bit - took a step backward - pulling the curtain and some of the stage trim down with him...he fell 40 feet and onto some of the band instruments that were in the pit. Some of the stage trim also fell into the front row. I ran down to see about Mary Rose, she was OK but Mr. Crosby's secretary, Lillian Murphy had received a bump on her head.

The children and Kathryn had been in the show, so they were backstage. We went with Mary Rose down to the pit - saw that one of our WAIF members, Dr. Basil McManus and his wife Maritz (she is also a doctor) were there. We decided we should leave - Mary Rose joined us. We went to the party for a short time. It was a sad time - everyone was wondering and hoping that he would be all right. Mary Rose stayed on with us and I took her to the Hospital a couple of times to see Bing before she went back to her home in Carmel.

Dorothy Lamour, co-star with Bing and Bob Hope in "Road" film series, arrives at St. Paul's Catholic Church for funeral services. The final rites for Bing were private and were attended only by relatives and close friends of the famed vocalist.

Mozelle arrives at Bing's funeral as "Dorothy Lamour"

It is sad to say, but the next time we saw her was at Mr. Crosby's funeral services. The night before the early morning service, Kathryn had a gathering at the hotel where she had reserved rooms for family and friends. Since I would have had to drive in from the Valley at that early hour, I stayed with Mary Rose. The next morning she rode with her brother, Bob, and I drove my own car. As I was cutting across the Church parking lot with a police escort the cameras flashed. The next day my photo was on the front page of papers all over as Dorothy Lamour at Bing Crosby funeral services. There is a full-page picture in the Movieland & TV Time Magazine.

The first time I saw it in the local paper, I called to tell them and they sent a reporter to the office, but it was never corrected. When I talked to Dottie about it - she said "Mozelle, just drop it, I am glad that everyone thinks I was there and you looked great"- so that is my claim to fame.

Dorothy Lamour and I had met in the early years and our friendship grew through our mutual friend, Pauline Kissinger who was the manager of the Paramount Studios Commissary from before the War until it was closed in 1985. The three of us sometimes celebrated our birthdays together with a lunch or a party. Dorothy invited us to her home for her New Year's Eve "black-eyed pea" party (a New Orleans tradition). Dottie was from New Orleans, Louisiana. My husband and I attended her party several years. Dottie came to our special anniversary parties that my daughters had for us.

After Pauline's husband died, she moved to an apartment near my area and when her health failed I spent time helping her with medical forms and finding caretakers. Dorothy and others helped us to get her into the Motion Picture Home. Dottie and I talked often and when Pauline passed away we had her services at the Motion Picture Home chapel and Dottie spoke.

After Dorothy died, her family invited me to her home to pick up a gift she had left for me. While there they asked me to read the scripture at her service. I told them that since I was a Methodist and Dottie a Catholic, perhaps they should re-consider. They insisted. I felt honored to be standing in the pulpit at this beautiful St. Charles Church where I had attended Dad Crosby and Mother Crosby's funeral services.

There were a lot of fans there and members of the movie industry, including Mary Crosby and Dolores and Bob Hope. Mary said I did a good job - at least my hands didn't shake.

I read the Greg Van Beek article in the BING summer magazine, Page 42, "Bing Crosby, The Final Round" with interest. It brought back memories of that day at the office - October 14, 1977. The first call that we received regarding Mr. Crosby's death was from an Associated Press reporter asking for Gary Crosby. He was told that we could not give him Gary's home phone number, then he said that Mr. Crosby had died in Madrid. Soon all the phones

started ringing. Lillian Murphy, Nancy Briggs and I spent the rest of the day talking to people, it was such a shock, some people asked questions, some just wanted to talk. We tried to keep a list of names for the family. One of the calls that I happened to answer was from Madrid. The caller told me that he was walking with Bing Crosby when he fell at his feet and was dead and other details about the day. I do not remember his name, and it was on the list that we sent to Kathryn. It must have been Valentin Barrios. It was a sad day and no time to cry.

I always wanted to meet Leslie Gaylor and see his Bing Crosby room. We were in touch through the years. When Mr. Crosby instructed me to send him a check, Leslie then asked me to return the cancelled check. Sometimes I would take time to write him a note. He was a good publicist for Mr. Crosby - but Gary Giddins was wrong - Leslie did cash those checks!

Phillip Crosby brought the Hayden Lake, Idaho home from the second owner. I talked to him last week and he told me about his trip there in August. He likes his TV, especially ball games. He has always talked lovingly about his Mom and Dad.

Mary Frances has been my friend through the years. I had lunch with her and baby Ben at their Malibu home last Thursday. She is very happy in her role as wife and mother. She asked me to tell you and I quote: "We, as a family, really appreciate your support of Dad." She also suggested my telling you more about Leo Lynn and others — but that will have to be later.

I am blessed with our two beautiful daughters and their families, five grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. They have done well in the business world as well as being happy in their personal lives. I keep active as a Trustee of the Church, and a member of numerous Charities. I love traveling to various parts of the country and visiting my friends and family.

Through the years, I always felt that Bing Crosby was a friend, as well as my Boss. And as I look back I think I had one of the best jobs in the world for a very interesting family.

I want to thank, Joanne for coming with me and George O'Reilly for being our director and Thank You for listening.

Mozelle Seger

What The Papers Say

In August, Stan White drew my attention to some Bing coverage in a UK weekly paper called *The Weekly News*. The paper is running a series on the top voices of the twentieth century as per the recent BBC poll, details of which we gave in BING #128. The article was generally favourable but contained the usual gross exaggerations. Stan wrote to them about this and I dropped them a gentle line too as follows:

> I was pleased to see the coverage about Bing Crosby in your issue of August 11 and my compliments to Ron McManus for a generally favourable article about the "Old Groaner."
>
> There were a few factual errors and it was a pity you didn't mention that Bing is the third most popular movie star in the history of films and that he was the top film box office star for 5 years in the 1940s. The gross exaggerations of phrases such as "A ladies' man and a drinker, he enjoyed a full-blooded lifestyle. . ." and "Secret dark side of classic crooner" are a long way from the truth but I suppose that they might bring Bing to the attention of a new generation as well as help sell copies of your paper. To be an icon nowadays, it helps to die young, perhaps from a drug overdose, and unfortunately Bing doesn't fit these modern parameters. Still, there's no such thing as bad publicity!

No reply was received and as far as I know my letter was not printed.

Derek Perkins gave me a cutting from the Irish Times of March 24 headed "Tiger not biggest draw". It was all about the biggest audiences for televised golf and showed that Bing's 1971 pro-am tournament still holds the record for the largest television audience for a golf event. Amazing! - but very nice to read.

Bert Bishop's
BING ON THE BOX

With the possible amalgamation of the USA's Club Crosby with the ICC it will be a foregone conclusion that BING magazine will reflect that marriage of 'the party of the first heart and the party of the second heart', for as the song says, "Takes Two To Make A Bargain", and BING magazine is certainly a bargain: so 'sign on that dotted line' to support what will be the biggest and best appreciation society in the world!

This column then, like the rest of the magazine, will attempt to broaden its horizons to include Stateside news of broadcasts and transmissions as well as a regular roundup of national programmes from this side of the pond and points beyond. Inevitably this will mean cutting down the reviews of UK local radio. Hence, it is hoped that opening 'The Box' will be a more cosmopolitan experience for all our members.

But before continuing may I express in this column sincerest condolences to the people of the United States of America for the horrific events of 11th September. It is almost a certainty that there will be ICC or Club Crosby members who suffered personal loss of a relative, friend or acquaintance. That hideous act of aggression overshadows all our lives at this time and it is hoped that, as with our mutual admiration, remembrance and promotion of Bing Crosby, the natural bond of our two nations will survive and prosper despite the acts of evil men and their brainwashed minions. It is difficult to immediately lighten the tone, but life must go on and by continuing to pursue our lives and interests we cock a snook at the barbarians.

So what then has been showing on a TV screen in your hometown?

Would you settle for *Road To Morocco; Holiday Inn; High Time; That's Entertainment 1 & 2* and *High Society* on your British screens? No? I thought not. A half dozen films over four months on twenty-seven film channels is poor consolation for fun starved film fans. Especially when one of those is *High Society* which has almost a fortnightly TCM presentation. I've seen it so many times now I find myself pre-empting the dialogue! Clearly a favourite in the Turner catalogue of MGM musicals. It is interesting to note that *Holiday Inn* was screened by The Studio. Not a satellite channel that is in my package, but if they come up with any of the rarities there will definitely be an upgrading in the Tideway household.

Meanwhile, U.S. households have been able to enjoy *The Road To Hong Kong; The Country Girl; Robin And The 7 Hoods*; *Scared Stiff* and *That's Entertainment* among others previously screened. Arguably the least popular of the Road movies, *Hong Kong* would have benefited by being a colour production which, by 1961 one would have expected. By comparison with the earlier musical travelogues this is a last legs attempt at reviving the series after a nine year lapse. It fell at the first fence when Dotty Lamour was relegated to a guest appearance. Her sequence was the most enjoyable and only segment of the film which bore any real resemblance to earlier capers and in my opinion proved that by tampering with the established formula a great disservice was done to the still lovely Miss Lamour, Crosbyphiles in particular and cinemagoers in general. R.I.P.

Soundtrack Of The Century Part 2 [of eight parts] - "Popular Song" was a musical documentary exploring the jazz age and featuring the influence of American singers such as Bing, Billie Holiday and Frank Sinatra that appeared on American television. The series has already been shown here in the U.K. and most British readers will have watched the relevant parts of a very interesting series that showed Bing in a very influential light. Similarly, an *Ella Fitzgerald biography* was screened and, as we all know, she guested with Bing many a time though never on a commercial record. "Basin Street Blues" and "That's A-Plenty" vie with the Bing and Connee versions for the greatest jazz duets ever, while their joint rendition of "White Christmas" is a charming, seasonal alternative to the regular track. In this programme Tony Bennett narrated an affectionate profile of the lady who was at home with both jazz and ballads and was up there with the best of them - even though many purists discount her as a true jazz singer.

As this article was being completed, news came that the long-lost 1957 Frank Sinatra Christmas TV show with Bing as a guest will be airing on cable television in the USA this December on the Trio network. It is a half-hour of yuletide classics as sung by Bing and Frank. Greg Van Beek advises us that the show was filmed in both black and white (for TV

broadcast) and in colour (for Frank Sinatra's own collection). Frank's colour copy is the one that will air. It seems that it will also be shown at the Museums of TV & Radio in New York and Los Angeles over the holiday period and the advert from the Museum follows:

Newly Discovered in Color
by Nancy Sinatra

The Frank Sinatra Show: "Happy Holidays with Bing and Frank"
November 29-December 23

In 1957 two of America's inimitable singers, Frank Sinatra and Bing Crosby, joined forces to celebrate the holiday season. Broadcast in black and white on ABC, which did not have color facilities, this pairing of crooners resulted in a "thoroughly satisfying . . . Yuletide songalog is presented with simplicity and taste," according to Daily Variety. It appears that Sinatra made a color film for possible theatrical distribution. That 35 mm film remained dormant in the archives until discovered by daughter Nancy earlier this year, and the Museum is pleased to premiere this digitally remastered color version of the Christmas classic The Frank Sinatra Show: "Happy Holidays with Bing and Frank," which features Sinatra and Crosby singing thirty minutes worth of traditional carols and holiday songs.

Bing guests on Frank's 1957 Christmas show.

The Museum did screen the show in black and white some time ago and a review by Tom Beer (which Steven Lewis has uncovered) reads quite nicely:

> *"A couple of years ago, the Museum of Television and Radio in New York City screened a 1957 Christmas special featuring Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra. Like much early television, the program was stagy and stiff, the pacing sluggish, the material corny. Sinatra was, by then, at his peak—way too hip for such a square show. The revelation, however, was Crosby. The old-time crooner was relaxed and charming and fun to watch—more so even than Sinatra—and the viewer felt that Crosby was enjoying all this schmaltz and yet winking at us, too."*

I hope to have further details in the next issue of BING.

THE BUCK STOPS HERE

Do we have any erstwhile members of The Bunny Club among our readers? Come on now, don't be coy. Had you watched *The Bunny Years* on BBC1 last August you may well have had your fifteen minutes of fame that Lionel was writing about in the last issue of the magazine. Members of that essentially harmless fraternity were shown cavorting at various establishments while our own man also turned up as a paying guest on a Flip Wilson show excerpt entitled, unsurprisingly, 'The Bunny Club'. Someone, somewhere must have a video recording of this hilarious comedy sketch which has Bing seated at a table one New Year's Eve calling 'Where's my Bunny? I need a drink', while an appropriately attired Flip, complete with ears and fluffy tail attached to a pneumatically enhanced, figure hugging costume, discourages any shenanigans by advising the table guest, pointedly; "What you see is a lot more than what you gonna get!" The amusingly racy dialogue is available on the LP 'Geraldine, Don't Fight The Feeling' published by Little David Records on which there are seven sketches by this black comedian who, sadly, died a short while ago.

THE OLD ROUTINE

Donald O'Connor has been 'on the air' quite a lot recently. A while ago he was a 'phone in guest on the BBC Essex Saturday night farrago of entertainment from the haltingly breathless Eric Hall. He relayed to listeners how he started in films with SING YOU SINNERS and was quick to point out what fun Bing was to work with. 'He was so nice to

me when I was a kid, and always very protective. He loved kids, especially if they had the ability to perform.' After featuring his duet with Bing of "Back In The Old Routine" he explained that twenty-five years later he again paired with Bing in ANYTHING GOES - Bing's second-go-round at this Cole Porter musical on film. 'Bing was a marvellous guy and we got along beautifully.' Desmond Carrington also gave Donald a nice showing when he featured, back-to-back, the two wireless versions of "Small Fry". Firstly from Kraft Music Hall back in 1938, when Donald was barely a teenager, and fourteen years later on the Chesterfield programme. Donald is of classic circus performing family origins, being 'born in a trunk' as they say. His hoofing, clowning and singing were in the best tradition of vaudeville, a largely extinct form of entertainment resurrected to a degree once a year, and then only in Britain, by pantomime.

Donald with Bing in 1938.

Those of you who also subscribe to Club Crosby's BINGANG magazine will know of Greg Van Beek as a contributing editor and feature writer of our sister magazine. During the summer Greg guested on 'Flying Home', a big band style radio programme hosted by Ronnie Paul from Fresno, California. Musical excerpts from a TV Special from 1962, featuring Road songs, which I well remember seeing, and a hefty slice of Bob Hope's Swan Show were the opening sequences prior to Greg's introduction. The interview followed a familiar pattern of question and answer during which Greg was keen to point out that Club Crosby holds the distinction of being the oldest fan club in existence as verified by the Guinness Book Of Records. Greg was able to say that Gary Giddins biography on Bing was proving a good seller in the States and that it had rekindled an interest in Bing, resulting in a few more members. Asked as to who were Bing's favourite duettist and closest friend Ronnie's guest was able to quote Rosemary Clooney and Phil Harris in those particular roles. Delving into Bing's early career and the competition from Rudy Vallée, Ronnie suggested there might have been some animosity in their obvious rivalry. But Greg was able to deny this suspected probability by telling the host that Rudy Vallée was a welcome guest on a Philco Radio Time broadcast when with Walter O'Keefe the trio performed the amusing "Hand Holdin' Music". Being a big band programme a track from the Bregman album was selected to close Greg's section, and he departed to the ebullient strains of "I've Got Five Dollars" as the address for joining Club Crosby was broadcast. Some really good publicity for Bing on the popular and wide ranging, week-end KAAT Station. Greg anticipates doing a Christmas Crosby special on the same FM 103.1 wavelength.

HOMEBASE

Russell Davies continues to entertain with his *Classics And Curiosities* series on Sunday afternoons here in the U.K., and as it's broadcast nationwide at a popular time the listening figures must be pretty high. There's always some controversy and a certain amount of nit-picking but, all-in-all, it's a fascinating programme, dissecting the attributes and anomalies of both songs and recording artistes. In playing "I Still Suits Me", on which Bing duets with the difficult-to-work-with Lee Wiley, Russell comments that the minstrel type of lyrics, which were at least legitimised by Paul Robeson and Elizabeth Welch, being black artistes themselves and the original performers, are all very questionable when performed by whites. 'It sounds a bit like a plantation cabaret given by slave owners.' Well, Russell, it may now but it certainly didn't then. One cannot deny, for example, that 'The Black & White Minstrel Show' was hugely popular in it's day and as far as we know caused no offence that was ever voiced. 'The moving finger writes; and, having writ, moves on. Nor all thy piety nor wit shall lure it back to cancel half a line.'

In a later programme Russell introduced the next

item by saying; 'Over the years it's one of the generous things about the Bing Crosby legacy that the many millions of International Crosby fanatics have been allowed to see their idol coming unstuck quite a few times; in contrast with the Sinatra fraternity where the family have kept prying ears at bay and saved the patriarch from this minor form of humiliation.' The example on this occasion was the live broadcast on a 1944 Mail Call of Meredith Wilson's "Iowa". It took four takes to get it right, but Russell played only the three blow-ups, believing that it was such a lousy song anyway the fourth and final version was not worth broadcasting. The object of the exercise being that Bing was great enough to survive such embarrassment; indeed, his ability to ad lib in these circumstances only enhancing his stature and affection among his many millions of followers at that time.

A publicity recording of "Please" introduced by Stuart Erwin and the strange circumstances of the "Can't We Talk It Over" track, with the half-mile distant Helen Crawford, were others commented on at length; and he also noted Cole Porter's appreciation of Gilbert & Sullivan whose influence is evident on "I've A Shooting Box In Scotland" - one of Porter's earliest efforts; with extra lyrics by Ken Barnes on the Astaire - Crosby version.

HIT AND MISS

Just how many hit records did Bing have? In playing "I Didn't Slip, I Wasn't Pushed, I Fell" from an original 78rpm, Keith Skues imparted the information that it was Bing Crosby's 284th hit record. I'm unaware how he came by this specific fact, but it would be interesting to see the complete list! Don't get too much from Skuesy these days, whereas Angela Rennells, though not actually a Miss, is certainly a hit with her listeners. She's definitely batting for us as she plays a Bing track two or three times a week.

If he will permit the familiarity, dear old Des continues to include Bing each and every Sunday without fail on his All-Time Greats programme on BBC Radio 2 (which can be heard over the Internet at www.bbc.co.uk/radio2). Preceding Russell Davies this means that in the three hour period between 1pm and 4pm GMT there will be at least one Crosby record and possibly two or three. 'The voice may sound familiar but different to the tones we know and love' was his comment on "Side By Side", the 1927 Rhythm Boys number by Harry Woods, whose name has been cropping up in this column quite a bit this year. That Bing had such a vast and varied output enables Mr. Carrington to feature him so frequently without getting stuck in the 'best of Bing the balladeer' groove. "Cool Water", "My Baby Said 'Yes'" and "I'm Confessin'" are just a few that illustrate that infinite variety. Desmond was to remember the anniversary of Bing's death by announcing that he had received many cards and letters reminding him of the sad occasion. As an uplifting tribute he played the Palladium version of "On A Slow Boat To China" as performed by Bing and Rosie Clooney some twenty-five years ago.

An appropriate cartoon from Ted Laker.

COLLECTABLE CALENDAR

In itself the Crosby Collectables Calendar is a collector's item and praise is due to all those involved in its concept and production. There have been complaints that it is not easy to read, and we are told that next year's will return to the more familiar format. But it is such a treasure trove of published memorabilia and has been so fascinating to browse through each month that I shall be sorry when January 2002 comes around. Certainly Paul Barnes has had no difficulty in maintaining his first-of-the-month review of each page and has played appropriate recordings to match the illustrations. Occasionally there has been a certain amount of resourcefulness as with substituting "I'm Gonna Sit Right Down And Write Myself A Letter" for "One Sweet Letter From You" which appears on the August page, but not in Paul's collection of Crosby. For September, the expansion of the Philco Radio Time advertisement included not only the Harry James instrumental of "Cottontail" from Philco No. 87 [sadly no Mrs. 'Betty Grable' James from the same programme] but delved further back into Bing's radio career to bring to his listeners a track or two from the Dorsey years on K.M.H. On a later

occasion "Have You Got Any Castles, Baby" and Walter O'Keefe introducing the Rhythm Boys in their 1930 recording of "Everything's Agreed Upon" were imaginative and hugely enjoyable deviations from the standard stuff. A recent revelation for Paul was his discovery via Gary Giddins book [page 425] of Bing's ad lib 'Too hot for you, Uncle Fud?' on the Johnny Mercer song "I'm An Old Cowhand". Bing's affectionate interpolation refers to Fud Livingston, the orchestral arranger for that recording. Although I'd always been aware of the line I'd never connected it with Joseph Livingston the sidesman-arranger-composer who gave us, as joint composer, "I'm Through With Love". Just how he came to be nicknamed Fud is still a mystery to this column though. Paul's comments on Gary's book were: 'I've just started to read an absolutely splendidly written and assiduously researched biography of Bing written by Gary Giddins. An absolutely marvellous book!"

RHYME AND REGION

Despite being a founder of *Memory Lane,* the magazine for Al Bowlly fans, and lovers of the British dance band scene, Frank Wappat repeatedly states on his Tyneside programme that Bing is the King of them all. It's not really such an anomaly for most of us appreciate nearly all the music and artistes who were contemporary with Bing in those two great decades of popular music when he really was The King. I also collect Al Bowlly and the dance bands, but as with Bing, Frank Sinatra and others the styles are so different that it is perfectly reasonable to be able to enjoy each and every one of them on their respective merits. One instance of that is the lovely verse to "My Melancholy Baby", which Al sings so beautifully on his recording but, which I have long regretted, was omitted from Bing's version. Frank stated how Bing used to send him letters and cassettes with recording information, and that personal touch endeared him all the more.

'Unforgettable'. That's Gerald Jackson's view on the Northern Network, it being the name of his programme. He tells us that he gets lots and lots of letters each week asking for Bing Crosby, and while that may reflect the seniority of his audience we can only hope that the musically mature, who are still not of 'a certain age', will be gaining an appreciation of their choice. Gerald is convinced that one of his listeners is working his way through the entire BBC collection of Crosby recordings, for each week brings a request for a new title which, on the occasion of the comment, was "When You're Away". Depending on the Beeb's record library of our man this could take a few years!

This column has listed most of the presenters' programme titles over the years. All very apposite, but perhaps none more so than Henry Ayrton's BBC North 'The Real Music Show'. If you can at all pick up this programme it's worth twiddling the dial for a feast of musical entertainment. Bing gets plenty of playings, as indeed he does on Ann Hopper's 'Music Box'. Recently rejoining the ICC, Pat Doyle makes sure that these sympathetic presenters get the message across to their respective catchment areas, and we welcome Pat's regained enthusiasm in that respect. Ann was to comment on how generous Bing was with his duetting partners: a couple of tracks from the 'Fancy Meeting You Here' album; "Don't Fence Me In" and "The Waiter, The Porter And The Upstairs Maid" illustrating her point. On another occasion she introduced "Granada" as being by Sinatra's greatest rival and concluded, after the record had spun to a close; 'Was there any song Bing couldn't sing?' Well, no. But there were just a few that he sang that came over as a lesser performance than the high standard we grew to expect and appreciate on the vast majority. Happily, "Granada" is in the latter group, but "Till The Clouds Roll By" is not, in my opinion, one of Bing's best, and is of the genre that may well have prompted one very unkind reviewer from years past to state that Bing's epitaph should read 'Lost On The High C's'. He obviously hadn't heard much from the 1930's, such as "Down By The River"!

HORN OF PLENTY

'Where are you getting all these Bing Crosby - Rosemary Clooney recordings?' asks a listener of 'String Of Pearls' presenter Christine Prentice. It was noted in this column last time around how much of a cornucopia of Crosby and Clooney she had logged on to. But now, she digs even deeper as she delves into the considerable collection of radio material which this most musically matched pair committed to tape in their radio hey-day. Much of this is on CD now, either by commercial release or through the good auspices of Barry Whittingham. But Christine hadn't completely abandoned the solo performances by Bing, and with "The Kiss In Your Eyes" and "Little Lady Make Believe" illustrated so beautifully his vocally unaccompanied, matchless talent.

SOUTH AMERICA - BY HELICOPTER?

Some seven years after the very first Bing and the Andrews Sisters collaboration on "Ciribiribin" they

got together for a recording of the hit song from 'Call Me Mister', only a month after the show first opened on Broadway. The number was "South America, Take It Away", written and composed by Harold Rome. It's a very lively song full of clever, internal rhyming and ideally suited to the vocal partnership and great backing by Vic Schoen. It was a track chosen by Chris Robinson on his 'Sunday Late Show' as a musical clue for his Mystery Year quiz. A more difficult, and non-musical clue, was that the year in question was the first that helicopters were made in Britain, and if anyone knew that they are more Mastermind than Millionaire!

Chris was also to say that when Bing recorded "St. Louis Blues" with Duke Ellington in 1932 no one then could have imagined Bing's impact on the Twentieth Century. Least of all himself. I would say. Included in Chris's considerable output of musical Crosbyana [last quarter's Man Of The Month] was "The Spaniard Who Blighted My Life" for Des, husband of my South & West devotee, Maggie Ryan. My thanks to her and all who contribute to this column one way or the other.

Flying the flag in Bristol and BBC Radio Wales are old stalwarts David Lowe and Dewi Griffiths who appear to have a listener base getting just a little bit younger year by year. A while ago their requests included plenty of tracks from the 'Thirties, but in more recent times there's been a shift to ballads from the 'Forties, or later. Even a request for "Temptation" resulted in the 1945 recording.

Ed Stewart, BBC Radio 2, Sundays, and Gary Copely and his Big Band G.M.R. programme were among those noting Bing's passing; but many prefer to celebrate his birth rather than note his death. Personally, I believe that any remembrance of Bing can only be a good thing for his perpetuity

Hanging on to the coat tails of Chris Robinson, would a regular quiz question in these pages be of interest? If so it will always relate to a recording or event specifically mentioned in this column's roundup for the current issue of the magazine. In other words, have you been paying attention?! O.K., then; for starters: on what recording does Bing mention the product Listerine? Sorry, no prizes; this is just for fun. Answer, next time around. Good grief - that's next Spring!

Bert Bishop

(Editor: Thanks, Bert for your usual comprehensive look at Bing's TV and radio exposure. As Bert says, he will be cutting back his coverage of the regional UK radio stations in future and he will welcome news of TV and radio Bing items from all over the world. There must be many radio stations playing Bing regularly and for instance, here's news from the USA and Australia.)

Hey Jude

This has always been a somewhat controversial recording by Bing. Fred Reynolds was very critical of it in his book "The Crosby Collection" and I was interested to see the following entry by Lee on the Bing Crosby Internet Museum on October 18.

> *Guess what? This morning on the Howard Stern show Bing was mentioned and talked about with Howard's special guest, Paul McCartney. Howard was playing records to Paul of other people's generally bad renditions of Beatles songs. Then he asked if Paul had heard Bing's "Hey Jude", Paul said no and Howard played it. Paul seemed to genuinely like it, he said, "Hey, Go Bing! He's sounding good there." Paul said he likes it when other people do his songs. While Howard probably played Bing hoping to elicit a negative comment out of Paul, Paul liked it and so did I.*

From Australia, we read of two radio shows on Melbourne Community Radio which will be of interest to our members in that area. Eastern FM98.1 features a golden hour of Crosby classics hosted on behalf of the Victorian Bing Crosby Society (VBCS) by Bob Neate and Bill Bennett on the second Tuesday of every month at 1:00 p.m. Also WYN-FM 88.9 FM VBCS member John Funnell presents two hours of nostalgic listening in his programme "I've Heard That Song Before" between 5 and 7 p.m. every Wednesday. WYN-FM is based in Werribee but can be heard throughout the Western suburbs.

Please let Bert have details of any Bing related programmes in your area and if you can send him a tape, so much the better.

ONCE IN A WHILE

Personalities associated with Bing who have died since our last issue include:

Larry Adler, who was 87 when he passed away in August. Widely accepted as the world's best-known exponent of the mouth organ, he was born in Baltimore, Maryland of Russian parents. He began piano lessons at the age of six but transferred his efforts to the mouth organ four years later. After

winning the Maryland Harmonica Championship of 1927, he went into show-business. From 1941 until 1949 he toured America with the dancer Paul Draper but in the early 1950s, he became involved in the defence of people suspected of communist sympathies and after this he decided to live in Britain. He became involved in the scores for films and he is perhaps most remembered in the U.K. for *Genevieve* (1953). Larry Adler crossed Bing's path on several occasions, appearing on the *Kraft Music Hall* shows of November 9, 1939 and April 30, 1942. Bing and Larry both appeared in the Bureau of Public Relations Washington Show at the National Theater in Washington D.C. on August 30, 1942, some of which was issued as *Command Performance* shows #30 and 31.

Fred De Cordova, the TV producer, died on September 15 at the Motion Picture and Television Fund Hospital in Woodland Hills at the age of 90. In 1944, De Cordova arrived in Hollywood after ten years in the New York theatre, and was employed by Warner Bros. as a dialogue director. Within a year he was a director, making his debut with *Too Young to Know.* By 1947 he had moved over to Universal where he directed Deanna Durbin in *For the Love of Mary.* Other routine films such as *The Desert Hawk, Peggy, The Countess of Monte Cristo, Little Egypt and Finders Keepers* followed. In retrospect, his most famous film was possibly *Bedtime for Bonzo* starring a chimpanzee and Ronald Reagan. He also directed *Bonzo Goes to College.* By the early 1950s, De Cordova realised, "I had done a whole batch of pictures and I saw that I wasn't going to become William Wyler," so he transferred his attention to the new medium of television. He had the good fortune to debut in 1951 with "The Burns and Allen Show" and was never out of work thereafter. He is most well-known for being the longest running producer of "The Tonight Show" on NBC. In the late '50s he took over the reins on "The Jack Benny Program" and had a similar role on "My Three Sons." He also directed Bing's first television special (televised on January 3, 1954) and a TV version of "Blithe Spirit," starring Noel Coward, Lauren Bacall and Claudette Colbert. He made the occasional return to film directing, including *I'll Take Sweden* (with Bob Hope) in 1965 and *Frankie and Johnny* (with Elvis Presley) in 1966.

Jay Livingston, Oscar-winning composer and lyricist, who with longtime collaborator Ray Evans penned such hits as "Que Sera Sera," the Christmas carol "Silver Bells" and the Nat King Cole classic "Mona Lisa," died in Los Angeles in October. He was 86.

During a 64-year collaboration, Livingston and Evans won Oscars for "Buttons and Bows" in 1948, which was originally sung by Bob Hope and Jane Russell; "Mona Lisa" in 1950 and "Que Sera Sera," in 1956, sung by Doris Day in the Alfred Hitchcock thriller *The Man Who Knew Too Much.* Other hits, now standards, included "Tammy," "Dear Heart," "To Each His Own," "Golden Earrings," "Home Cooking" and "Silver Bells," originally sung by Bob Hope in the movie *Lemon Drop Kid* in 1951. The pair also wrote the theme songs for two popular television series, "Bonanza," and "Mr. Ed."

Born in 1915 in the Pittsburgh suburbs, Livingston met Evans when both men were students at the University of Pennsylvania in the 1930s. Livingston was a journalism major and Evans studied banking but the two men liked to perform in a college orchestra and after graduation began collaborating - with Livingston writing most of the music and Evans penning most of the lyrics.

Bing sang many of the duo's songs and I was amused to read Ray Evans' comments on "Silver Bells" which he said started out as a routine chore. "Bob Hope needed a Christmas song but we thought they all had been written from 'White Christmas' on down. We originally called it 'Tinkle Bells,' but realized that had a double meaning. There was a silver bell on the desk at our office at Paramount. We laughed. We said we'd make it 'Silver Bells.' Later Bing Crosby recorded the song and gave it some stature."

Keeping Track

A Compact Disc Review by Jim Reilly

Well, here we are at the end of yet another year and we can still say that there was plenty to interest us throughout the year in the way of CDs. The Jonzo Chronological issues have been particularly good. It was great to see "Bing Sings Whilst Bregman Swings" re-issued on the Verve label. Memoir's issue of "Bing & Company" was also a pleasant album but my favourite for the year has got to be the Collectors' Choice aptly named album "Two Classic Albums By Bing Crosby". Also, I was very surprised when I received in the post a brand new black disc with a hole in the middle that plays on those things called record turntables. I had to dig back into the memory bank to recall that this big double sided disc was a long playing record, which in this case is called "Somebody Loves Me"!

Two Classic Albums By Bing Crosby **Collectors' Choice CCM-221-2** **USA**

That Travellin' Two-Beat:
1. That Travellin' Two-Beat
2. New Vienna Woods
3. Knees Up Mother Brown
4. Roamin' In The Gloamin'
5. Adios Senorita
6. Come To The Mardi Gras
7. Hear That Band
8. The Daughter Of Molly Malone
9. The Poor People Of Paris
10. I Get Ideas
11. Ciao, Ciao Bambina
12. That Travellin' Two-Beat (Reprise)

The Great Country Hits
13. Oh Lonesome Me
14. Heartaches By The Number
15. Four Walls
16. Crazy Arms
17. Bouquet Of Roses
18. Wabash Cannon Ball
19. Wolverton Mountain
20. Hello Walls
21. A Little Bitty Tear
22. Jealous Heart
23. Still
24. Sunflower

Wig Wiggins mentioned this CD in his article in the last issue of BING and indeed he reproduced a copy of the front sleeve for this and the other release by Collectors' Choice I shall be reviewing next. I, for one, am very pleased to have "That Travellin' Two-Beat" and "The Great Country Hits" tracks on CD although "That Travellin' Two-Beat" was issued on CD in Australia on the Axis label combined with the Bing & Satchmo LP titles (CDAX 701597). To my knowledge the songs from "The Great Country Hits" have not previously appeared on CD. The sound quality is excellent and I thoroughly enjoy listening to this album. I have always enjoyed hearing Bing with Rosemary Clooney and I like Bing's venture into country music.
Running Time: 65.53 *Price: £12.99, $16.95*

Bing Crosby Lost Columbia Sides 1928-1933 (2CDs) **Collectors' Choice CCM-216-2** **USA**

Disc 1: 1. Mississippi Mud, 2. 'Taint So, Honey, 'Taint So, 3. I'd Rather Cry Over You, 4. I'm On The Crest Of A Wave, 5. Out O' Town Gal, 6. I'll Get By, 7. Susianna, 8. If I Had You, 9. The Spell Of The Blues, 10. Let's Do It Let's Fall In Love, 11. Coquette, 12. My Kinda Love, 13. Till We Meet, 14. Louise, 15. Reaching For Someone, 16. Your Mother And Mine, 17. S'posin' Running Time: 53.01

Disc 2: 1. I Kiss Your Hand Madam, 2. Baby Oh Where Can You Be, 3. Can't We Be Friends, 4. Gay Love, 5. Great Day, 6. Without A Song, 7. I'm A Dreamer, Aren't We All, 8. If I Had A Talking Picture Of You, 9. After You've Gone, 10. A Bundle Of Old Love Letters, 11. Livin' In The Sunlight, Lovin' In The Moonlight, 12. You Brought A New Kind Of Love To Me, 13. St Louis Blues, 14. How Long Will It Last, 15. My Woman, 16. Cabin In The Cotton, 17. The Last Round-Up Running Time: 55.26

Again Wig Wiggins mentioned this in his column last time around so I won't go into the "Lost Sides" fiasco albeit that this is a very good double album which is very pleasant to listen to even without those tracks which would have made this a collector's item. There is nothing new to CD but the quality is fine. *Price: $24.99*

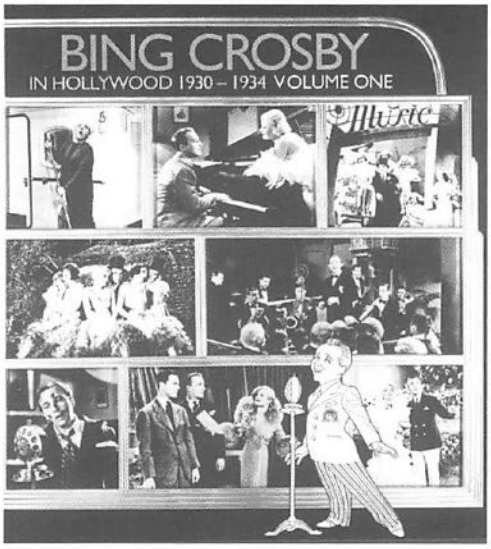
Fancy Meeting You Here **Bluebird 09026-63859-2** **USA**
1. Fancy Meeting You Here
2. On A Slow Boat To China
3. I Can't Get Started
4. Hindustan
5. It Happened In Monterey
6. You Came A Long Way From St Louis
7. Love Won't Let You Get Away
8. How About You
9. Brazil
10. Isle Of Capri
11. Say Si Si
12. Calcutta
13. Love Won't Let You Get Away
14. Ain't A Hankerin'
15. Protection
16. Love Won't Let You Get Away
17. Medley: Fancy Meeting You Here / On A Slow Boat To China / Hindustan
18. Ol' Man River
19. Twilight On The Trail

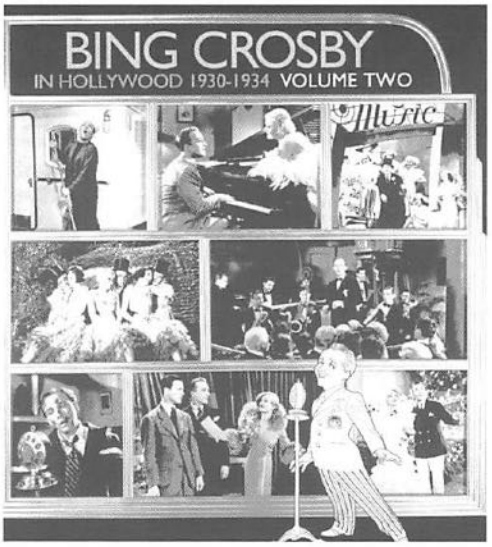
(Tracks 1-13 Bing with Rosemary Clooney, 14 and 15 Rosemary Clooney with Bob Hope 16 and 17 Bing with Jo Stafford)
This is our second dose of Bing with Rosemary Clooney and it is a shame that this is the third release on CD of the "Fancy Meeting You Here" album tracks, albeit that this CD has four additional Bing titles never before on compact disc; these are 16 to 19 which came from Bing's TV Show of March 2, 1959. If you haven't got the main titles previously on CD, it is still worth purchasing this one for the additional tracks. The quality is very good and the combination of Bing, Rosie and Billy May's orchestra always makes for enjoyable listening.
Running Time: 49.47 *Price: $14.99*

Bing Crosby In Hollywood 1930-34 Volume One **Collectables COL-CD-6805 Sony A52341** **USA**

KING OF JAZZ (1930): 1. Happy Feet, 2. A Bench In The Park (with the Brox Sisters), 3. A Bench In The Park, 4. It Happened In Monterey (non-Bing), 5. I Like To Do Things For You, 6. Ragamuffin Romeo (non-Bing), 7. So The Bluebirds And The Blackbirds Got Together, 8. Song Of The Dawn, The BIG BROADCAST (1932): 9. Dinah, 10. Please, 11. Here Lies Love, COLLEGE HUMOR (1933): 12. Learn To Croon, 13. Moonstruck, 14. Down The Old Ox Road, TOO MUCH HARMONY (1933): 15. Thanks, 16. The Day You Came Along

Running Time: 49.49 Price: $16.99





Bing Crosby In Hollywood 1930-34 Volume Two **Collectables COL-CD-6806 Sony A52342** **USA**

TOO MUCH HARMONY: 1. I Guess It Had To Be That Way, 2. Black Moonlight, GOING HOLLYWOOD (1933): 3. Just An Echo In The Valley, 4. Beautiful Girl, 5. After Sundown, 6. We'll Make Hay While The Sun Shines, 7. Temptation, 8. Our Big Love Scene, WE'RE NOT DRESSING (1934): 9. Love Thy Neighbor, 10. Once In A Blue Moon, 11. Good-Night Lovely Little Lady, 12. May I, 13. She Walks Like You, 14. I'm Hummin' I'm Whistlin' I'm Singin', 15. Love In Bloom, 16. Straight From The Shoulder

Running Time: 50.42 *Price: $16.99*

These titles have been issued on a number of previously released CDs and I am sure that many members will recall when they were issued by Columbia Records on a double LP in 1967. Both CDs are very nicely packaged with the same front sleeve artwork as per the LPs. The quality is excellent and it is a great pity that all these tracks have found their way onto CD many times before. The LP sleeve notes are faithfully reproduced complete with Bing's incorrect date of birth. For the benefit of members, the last issue on CD with the exact same contents was reviewed in BING 124, Spring 2000.

Going Hollywood, Vol. 3: 1940 - 1944 Jasmine **JASCD121/2** **UK**

CD 1

1. Intro, 2. Captain Custard, 3. Sweet Potato Piper, 4. Too Romantic, 5. Meet the Sun Halfway, 6. I Haven't Time to be a Millionaire, 7. Pessimistic Character, 8. If I Had My Way, 9. April Played the Fiddle, 10. What Would Shakespeare Have Said, 11. Only Forever, 12. That's For Me, 13. When the Moon Comes Over Madison Square, 14. Rhythm on the River, 15. Beware, 16. You Lucky People You, 17. African Etude, 18. It's Always You, 19. Birth of the Blues, 20. St James Infirmary, 21. Memphis Blues, 22. By the Light of the Silvery Moon, 23. Wait Till the Sun Shines Nellie, 24. My Melancholy Baby, 25. The Waiter and the Porter and the Upstairs Maid, 26. St Louis Blues. *(tracks 1,2, 4-6, 10, 14-15, 17, 19 & 21-27 are from film soundtracks although strictly speaking "Beware" was omitted from the released film). Running time: 71.36*

CD 2

1. I'll Capture Your Heart, 2. Lazy, 3. White Christmas, 4. Happy Holiday, 5. Let's Start the New Year Right, 6. Abraham, 7. Be Careful It's My Heart, 8. Easter Parade, 9. Song of Freedom, 10. I've Got Plenty to be Thankful For, 11. Road to Morocco, 12. Ain't Got a Dime to my Name, 13. Moonlight Becomes You, 14. Old Glory, 15. Sunday Monday or Always, 16. Swing Low Sweet Chariot, 17. She's from Missouri, 18. A Horse That Knows the Way Back Home, 19. If You Please, 20. Dixie, 21. Kinda Peculiar Brown, 22. The Day After Forever, 23. Silent Night Holy Night, 24. Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral (That's an Irish Lullaby), 25. Going My Way, 26. Ave Maria, 27. Swinging on a Star, 28. Goodtime Charlie, 29. It's Anybody's Spring, 30. Welcome to my Dream, 31. Put it There Pal *(tracks 1-6, 13-14, 17-28 and 30 are from film soundtracks although again, strictly speaking, "Kinda Peculiar Brown" was omitted from the released film). Running time: 75:15*

This is the latest issue in Geoff Milne's much appreciated "Going Hollywood" series and Geoff has been able to use a good number of sound track recordings on this very reasonably priced two-CD issue. The quality is excellent and it is a delight to have so many tracks which are new to CD. The CD is strongly recommended and I for one can't wait for Volume 4 which is already being prepared. Price £13.99

Classic Crosby Vol. 2

1. Sweet Georgia Brown
2. Just One More Chance
3. I'm Thru With Love
4. Let's Put Out the Lights

Naxos Nostalgia 8.120562 **Germany**

10. Lawd, You Made the Night Too Long (with Boswell Sisters)
11. A Faded Summer Love
12. Dinah
13. Try a Little Tenderness

5. Goodnight Sweetheart
6. I've Got to Pass Your House
7. Shine (with the Mills Brothers)
8. Too Late
9. I Apologise
14. At Your Command
15. Stardust
16. Lazy Day
17. Brother Can You Spare a Dime
18. Some of These Days

Running time: 57.58 Another very nice issue from Naxos although there is nothing new to CD. Good quality and reasonably priced. Price £5.99

It's Easy To Remember (4 CD box set) **Properbox 34** **UK**

As we went to press, news came in about this new box set which is being issued by Proper Records. Space does not permit a full track listing at this time but the compilation has been put together by Stan Britt who has also written the excellent notes in the 36 page booklet accompanying the set. Disc one is called "The Rhythm Boy" and the tracks run from "I've Got The Girl" to "A Ghost of a Chance". Disc two is "Music, movies, memories..." and covers songs from "Brother Can You Spare Dime" to "An Apple For the Teacher". Disc three is titled "Vocal innovators and the jazz connection" with tracks such as "Sierra Sue" running through to "Don't Fence Me In". The final disc is "King of the best sellers" and the tracks go from "Mine" to "If I Were a Bell". Looks to be a superb collection and a full review will appear in the next issue. The price is likely to be between £12.99 and £15.99 which is certainly very reasonable.

Cocktail Hour - Bing Crosby Duet **Cocktail Hour - number not known** **USA**

CD1

1. Basin Street Blues 2. Shine 3. If I Knew You Were Comin' I'd've Baked a Cake 4. St. Louis Blues 5. Lullaby of Broadway 6. Small Fry 7. When You Wore a Tulip 8. Dinah 9. On Top of Old Smoky 10. An Apple For The Teacher 11. You Came a Long Way (from St. Louis) 12. Mr. Meadowlark 13. The One I Love Belongs to Somebody Else 14. I Can Dream Can't I

CD2

My Honey's Lovin' Arms 2. Ciribiribin 3. Mr. Crosby and Mr. Mercer 4. On a Slow Boat to China 5. I'll Capture Your Heart 6. Bob White 7. Wait Till The Sun Shines Nellie 8. Takes Two to Tango 9. Pistol Packin' Mama 10. Moonlight Bay 11. I'm Falling In Love with Someone 12. Till We Meet Again 13. I Don't Know Why (I Just Do) 14. The Way You Look Tonight

This album is advertised on the net by Amazon and the track details are taken from the Amazon site too. It looks to be a mixture of radio and commercial items. The CD is issued by the Columbia River Entertainment Group and the last issue by them which I reviewed in BING #124 was not impressive. However I should very much like to hear from anyone who has picked up this set. Price £17.99

Bing Crosby: Jack B. Nimble: A Mother Goose Fantasy **Image Entertainment PUR 0951** **USA**

This is the nursery rhyme story originally issued by Golden Records in the late 1950s. Running time: 27 minutes. Price £8.99 from Amazon. The album is also available on cassette.

True Love **Music CD6314** **UK**
You Are My Sunshine **Music CD6315** **UK**
Going My Way **Music CD6316** **UK**

I have been advised of the imminent release of these CDs on the Music label. Price £2.99 each. Further details in the next issue.

Next, a new Long Playing Record - Yes that's right an LP! Tony Peverett is a great advocate of vinyl from a company called Past Perfect and he drew my attention to this issue.

Somebody Loves Me **Past Perfect Silver line 904335-980** **Germany?**

Side A: 1. Is You Is Or Is You Ain't (My Baby), 2. Sunday Monday Or Always, 3. Don't Fence Me In. 4. There's A Fella Waiting In Poughkeepsie, 5. Somebody Loves Me, 6. I'd Know You Anywhere, 7. San Fernando Valley, 8. Maybe, 9. Swinging On A Star. Running time: 25.25

Side B: 1. Day Dreaming, 2. My Buddy, 3. Begin The Beguine, 4. Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral, 5. I'll Be Seeing You, 6. Lullaby (Brahms), 7. Pistol Packin' Mama. *Running time: 24.49*

I must admit that I never ever thought that I would be reviewing a new LP in 2001 but here we are with this album which contains a nice selection of Bing's songs from 1939 to 1944. To should make contact with Vivante before sending any money to them. I nearly forgot to mention that the reproduction is first class - I had forgotten what it was like to listen to a such a good quality LP.

Christmas issues

New issues flood in at this time of year although inevitably the tracks will already be in most readers' collections. Also, many Christmas CDs which I have previously reviewed are being reissued and I hope that they all sell well! Details of some of the new issues follow.

I Wish You a Merry Christmas **Capitol CAP 33600** **USA**

Wig Wiggins has already described this in his article and please see "Bing in the USA" for further details. Price £11.99 from Amazon UK.

Christmas Gold - Bing Crosby and Friends **CHRG 001** **Holland**

A poor quality release with inaccurate notes. 14 tracks, not recommended. Price £2.99

A White Christmas with Bing Crosby and Friends **K-Tel ECD3688** **UK**
No details available at present. Price £4.99

Christmas with Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra **Music Club MCCDX024** **UK**
9 Bing tracks, namely White Christmas, Santa Claus is Coming to Town, God Rest You Merry Gentlemen, Silent Night, Faith of Our Fathers, Jingle Bells, Adeste Fideles, Silver Bells and I'll Be Home For Christmas. Price: £6.99

GUEST APPEARANCES

We'll Meet Again (3 CD Set) **Reader's Digest** **RDCD 3091-3** **UK**
Memories Of The War Years
Disc 1: 25 Tracks (1 Bing) Pistol Packin' Mama, **Disc 2:** 24 Tracks (3 Bing) Somebody Loves Me, Dolores and I Can't Begin To Tell You **Disc 3:** 23 tracks (3 Bing) Don't Fence Me In, San Antonio Rose and Trade Winds
I haven't heard this set myself but it is very reasonably priced with plenty of other stars from the war time years. Price CDs: £14.95, Cassettes: £14.45 - This was however a half-price introductory offer.

The Crosby Years **CD or Cassette**
A Tribute To Leslie Gaylor **Presented by Jim Reilly on Angel Community Radio**
I am pleased to tell you that I have been able to donate a total of £87.00 to Angel Radio as a result of the sales of the CDs and cassettes of my tribute programme. Angel was delighted with this and has asked me to thank the members who made purchases. Anyone still wishing to obtain this programme can do so by writing to me. Price: CD: £6.00 Cassette: £5.00

VIDEOS
I'm indebted to Terry Grifffiths for letting me know that Littlewoods in the UK are advertising a package of four Road films called "The Road Collection" for sale in their Christmas catalogue for £44.99. I think that I am right in saying these are Road To Singapore, Road To Morocco, Road To Zanzibar and Road To Utopia. Members may also be interested to note that I also noticed a UK national newspaper advertising a great many videos of classic films included "The Bells Of St Mary's", Holiday Inn" and "Going My Way". These were being sold for £10.00 each and were on sale from the mail order people, Movies & Memories, Dept V1897, Hays House, Box 99, St Austell, Cornwall Pl25 3YD, UK.

DVD's
Some members will be aware that quite a number of Bing's films etc. have been re-issued in the DVD format in the USA and UK. American releases include "Road To Bali" "The Bells Of St Mary's", "White Christmas" "The Adventures Of Ichabod And Mr Toad", Going My Way / Holiday Inn", "Road To Bali / Road To Hollywood" "A Bing Crosby Christmas" and "That's Entertainment". The next scheduled film for release in the USA is "Robin & The 7 Hoods" which is due out on January 8th, 2002. Apparently Warner Bros. are releasing this in a brand-new 16:9 widescreen transfer.
WARNING: It should also be noted that a number of machines purchased in the UK are not able to play films intended for the American market and vice versa. Machines may be capable of being converted to play American / UK DVD's, although this can be a costly exercise.

You may well be interested in the DVD's released by Ken Barnes' company Laureante Presentations in the UK as they do usually also have some Crosby content. They are available at most good stores in the UK selling DVDs and the latest issues are:-

Suddenly **Laureate 2004**
This 1954 film was made in black and white and stars Frank Sinatra alongside Sterling Hayden, James Gleason, Nancy Gates and Kim Charney. The story is about a possible assassination attempt on the President of United States in a little town called Suddenly with Frank Sinatra playing the would be assassin. Bing gets mentioned in the features about Frank Sinatra and there are also a couple of stills of Bing and Frank and part of the trailer for "High Society" is included.
Meet John Doe **Laureate SDE2006**
This 1941 film was also made in black and white and was directed by Frank Capra and starred Gary Cooper, Barbara Stanwyck, Edward Arnold and Walter Brennan. The Bing interest comes from the fact that Frank Capra directed two of Bing's films and Ken has included the trailer for "Riding High" when talking about the work of Frank Capra. It was a real pleasure watching the many trailers included with the film, particularly as I spent a good part of my misspent youth watching films on the silver screen. I am pleased to see films such as these restored for posterity and I enjoyed viewing both videos.
Other movies Ken's company have released on DVD include "Charade", "The Big Trees" and two Fred Astaire films "Royal Wedding" and "Second Chorus". Ken is also trying to obtain the rights to issue "Road To Rio" on DVD but this is still in the negotiation stage and may not come to fruition. One thing for sure he never misses the opportunity of giving Bing a plug.

I was very interested to see Gillian Kelly's article in BING 128 page 58 and to read her comments on some of Bing's recordings. It is refreshing to see a younger person's views on Bing. I wonder if you realised that her five selections all came from the MCA CD that is dear to my heart "Memories"?

Once again may I take the opportunity of thanking all those people who were helpful to me in letting me know about new CDs etc. throughout the year. In particular my thanks go out to Wig Wiggins, Charlie Baillie, Stan White, Maggie Ryan, Phil Clarke and Malcolm Macfarlane. I am sure that there are some names missing - please put this down to the wonderful memory that I have these days. My sincere best wishes to all our members for a Happy Christmas and New Year. I wish you all well and as they used to say in the bowling fraternity please all "Winter Well"

Jim Reilly

Bing Crosby

Las Cruces
May 10, 1969

Dear Gord:

Thanks for your letter, and for your Happy Birthday wishes, and for the enclosures received.

Delighted to learn that you put together a birthday program for me up there on CFRA and CFMO.

Jim Bowen, who produced the HEY JUDE/HEY BING Album has ideas for some other albums, and when I get back from my current visit to Mexico, we'll probably be talking about them.

I'd like to just keep an album coming out every once in awhile - sort of keep my hand in.

The program with George Jessel and Rich Little was a lot of fun to do. Jessel has always been a great friend of mine, and I find him very funny. I know to a lot of people, he doesn't come off that way, but he's such a character, everything he does makes me laugh.

Rich Little is tremendously gifted, it seemed to me.

If you come to the Coast again, Gord, let me hear from you. We can sit down and have a visit -

Always your friend,

Bing

Bing Crosby

BC:lm

Mr. Gord Atkinson
21 Alderbrook Drive
Ottawa 6, Ontario, Canada

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